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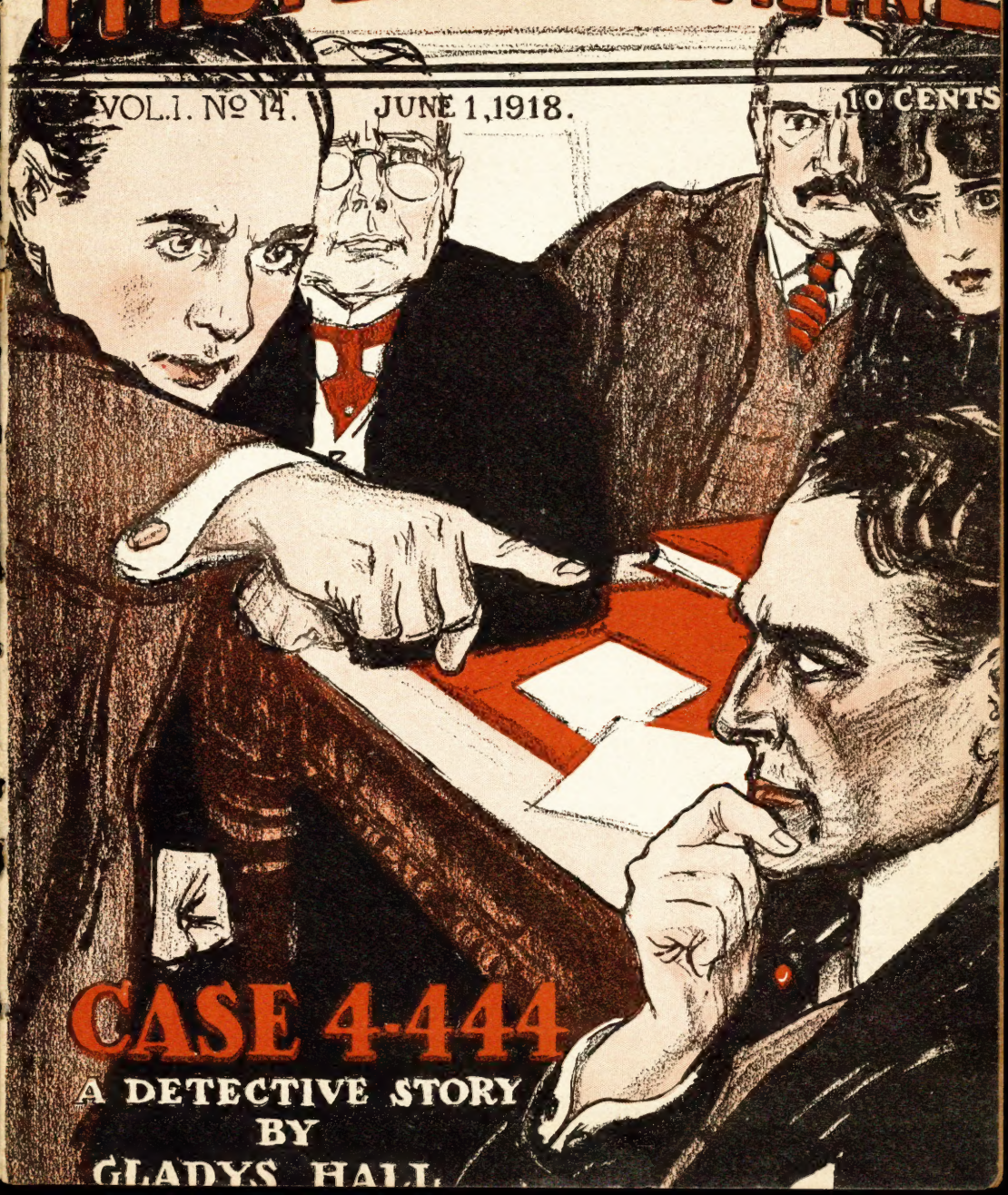

CASE 4-444

A DETECTIVE STORY

BY

GLADYS HALL

"AFTER A MILLION," a Detective Story, by Police Captain Howard, Appears in No. 15.

MYSTERY MAGAZINE

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CASE 4,444

A DETECTIVE STORY

By GLADYS HALL

CHAPTER ONE

THE STRANGE DEATH OF PROFESSOR CREIGHTON

"MISS ANTHONY! Miss Anthony! Miss—— Oh, my Gawd, why don't some one answer me?"

The maid's voice trailed off in a wailing exclamation, and her nervous knuckles rapped against the closed door again. She placed her ear against the keyhole and listened; she placed her eye to it and peered. Ordinarily she would have shrugged her plump shoulders and reported to the others that Miss Pearl did "sleep 'earty," and that there was no use of her "a-rappin'" all morning, and her with the professor's "anteeks a-coat with dust."

But this morning the professor was dead—stone dead among his antiques—and no one knew it save herself, Matty Tillish, the housemaid. In some inexplicable, ghastly way, no one seemed to want to know. There was something—ugh!—sort of death-like in the sleep of the rest of the household. Matty Tillish shuddered in a superstitious sweat.

After what seemed an eternity, a sleepy-sweet voice came trailing through the key-hole.

"All righty, Matty," it said, "I'll be down directly. Tell Guardy not to wait, and do call Roscoe."

Matty Tillish shuddered again. Oh, Lawk, was this what she had been born and raised for—to be mixed up in a murder? Matty Tillish nearly jumped out of her sleek skin at her own mental process. What had made her characterize the professor's death as murder? Something, she knew not what, made her feel in her bones that the dead man among his ancient relics had not died at the disposition of God, but by some more human agony. Had she not seen her father in his coffin? And had he looked like the handsome professor? He had not!

And it was hard, too, to have to be the bearer of such intelligence to Pearl Anthony. Yes, it was cruel hard. Much, much better had it been Dorky, the Welsh cook, who read murder stories with audible smacking of her huge lips—even read Hall Caine, and was proud of it.

"Are you still there, Matty?" came the traily voice again, this time a bit surprisedly.

Matty screwed up her courage, which was fast being transmuted into hysteria.

"Yes, Miss Pearl," she called wildly. "Oh, miss, the professor—is—dead! I found him on the floor in the anteek room! Oh, Miss——"

There was a stifled sound, the door was flung open, and Pearl Anthony appeared in the open way, a wand-like vision in pink crêpe-de-chine. Her blue eyes started nearly out of her head, and her delicately pink face was as though it had been whitewashed. She could not speak; could only shake the sobbing girl, and gasp. Finally she found her voice.

"Call Ros—— Mr. Creighton!" she managed to say. "Be quick!"

Matty stumbled blindly down the hallway and rapped on the door at the end. There was the sound of an answering voice—a shrill, shaken "My God in heaven!" and then a sort of a tense silence as the two young people made ready to face—what?

They reached the scrolled door of the professor's dearly beloved antique room almost simultaneously. Fear was depicted on each young face—a sort of terror, but mostly grief. To the most casual observer it would have been evident that these young persons had loved the dead professor, that the fact that he was gone was uppermost in their minds. There was a sort of a similarity in their appearance, too, though they were no blood relation—Roscoe Creighton being the son of the professor's dead brother, and Pearl Anthony the daughter of an old and cherished friend. But both were fair, both slender and blue-eyed, and both apparently untested, untried and untouched.

Roscoe reached for her hand and closed his over it, and together they entered the temporary mausoleum of the man who had been as protective as a father, as tender as a mother and as loyal as a chum to both of them.

He lay flat upon his back, with the morning sunshine like a horrid parody on his dead white face. His black hair, with its striking silver marking, was barely disordered; his velvet dinner-coat and the immaculate white shirt were in their last-evening state of pristine freshness. There was no sign of disorder about him; no sign of flurry or of struggle. He seemed as though sleeping; so strong was the semblance of sleep, indeed, that Pearl bent her fair head to his heart and listened. When she raised it, tears were streaming down her cheeks.

"He's dead, Roscoe," she whispered despairingly; "dead—here—all alone. Oh, Guardy, my father, my more than friend——"

Roscoe was weeping too—silently, as men do. When he spoke, his voice was husky.

"Do you suppose," he said tentatively, "we ought to call the—the——"

"Pardon me if I intrudes, Miss Pearl," broke in the strong, rather strident voice of Dorky, the Welsh cook, "but it's customary, miss, to call a physician at such times as this. I wouldn't be wasting no time, if I was you."

Roscoe jumped to his feet eagerly. "Just what I was about to say," he ejaculated. "There might be a chance yet."

He vanished in the direction of the extension in the hall, the while Dorky followed him admiringly with her eyes.

"The professor was an own father to him, poor boy," she murmured. "He'll be taking it bitter hard." Then she stepped up to her dead master and surveyed him grimly. "There's none of the 'chance' he speaks of, though"—she gave forth definitely—"the poor master is as dead as a door-nail."

Pearl shrank as from a physical blow, and laid her head again on the silent breast.

"Oh, Dorky, don't!" she begged. "I loved him, too, you know."

Dorky sniffed. She had been the only one in the professor's household, or among his friends, who had not capitulated to the winsome charm of Pearl Anthony. She herself could not have defined her antagonism. It was surely not that of sex—the innate jealousy of the ugly woman for the fair. It had a vague connection with the fact that since her coming the silver markings in the professor's night-black tresses had grown and spread; and then, Dorky was intensely loyal and fiercely partisan of the Creightons. She took quite a delight in being permitted to watch the professor trace the ancestral tree; and this girl was not a Creighton. She was a rank outsider; parentage, in so far as Dorky was concerned, unknown. Once she had ventured to ask the professor.

"Her father was my dearest friend," he had said.

And then he had dropped the subject. That was not like him; generally he was expansive, particularly with Dorky, in the complex workings of whose mind he took a vast delight. His reticence had not further endeared Pearl to the giant Welsh woman. She had felt her to be, in some ambiguous way, the instigator of the one insult her employer—and idol—had ever given her. Deep in the impassable ravines of her involved heart Dorky had loved Eustace Creighton with the gaunt, servile, ingrowing love of a servant for a master, who is also a man. Her grief for him was gaunt, too—gaunt and despairing. She did not show it; she looked grim and hard.

In ten minutes the family doctor was in the room. He raised Pearl from her almost frozen posture, her head on her guardian's breast; then he placed her carefully in the professor's low chair, and bent to an examination of the man who had been, as he was to most with whom he came into contact, friend first.

Doctor Dunbar knew the professor perfectly, anatomically; he knew the workings of each organ, the precise amount of his blood pressure, the state of his arteries, the chances of his longevity; he knew him to be an almost perfect specimen—a rare being, without even the gentlemanly leaning toward Bright's disease.

When he arose from his examination he cleared his throat. His face looked rather strained.

"The professor has not died from natural causes," he said distinctly.

"Doctor, what do you mean?" cried Pearl tearfully.

"Do you mean mur——" broke in Roscoe constrainedly, then stopped at the doctor's admonitory hand.

"We won't name it, young man," he said not unkindly, "until we have to."

"Ag-h!" grunted Dorky gutturally, and then she turned her head, almost denuded of hair, to wipe from her slatey eyes two bitter, hard-wrung tears—her virgin tears.

"We must send for the police," said the doctor. "Will you attend to that, Roscoe?"

The young man nodded, and again left the room. Dorky stalked out toward the kitchen, where on all preceding mornings she had been wont to fry the professor's oaten cakes, and Pearl again dissolved into tears. The doctor stood staring down at the body—immutable, mysterious, unsolvable, the baffling, eternal riddle of death—and thought of the many discussions he and this man had had on death and the ensuing possibilities of a protracted existence, if any.

"This is sad, very sad," he said, shaking his head, "and I am afraid that it is more than sad."

CHAPTER TWO

ENTER THE POLICE

SERGEANTS Flaherty and O'Donnell arrived from headquarters in response to a call. They were extremely business-like. They would not touch the body until the coroner and the coroner's physician had inspected it and given their order of removal.

"It looks bad," was Flaherty's solemn verdict.

Sergeant O'Donnell used the phone. He evidently got his chief on the wire.

"Will you sind up the coroner, sir?" he said. "We've lift the body. There's no sign of dhirty work, at all; but it's a nasty look, sir. . . . Very good, sir. By-by."

There was a wait of an hour or more for the coroner and his physician. Pearl, by this time, had regained some of her composure, after the amazing manner of women. Roscoe was breaking down visibly.

The two bereft young creatures crouched together on the big leather divan in one corner, and gazed with stricken eyes on the silent figure on the floor.

"He seems to grow stiller and stiller all the time," mourned Pearl.

"If he only hadn't been so good to me," said Roscoe regretfully.

"It gives us memories," mused Pearl; "but, oh, it's hard. Seems as if he was all the parent I ever had."

"He took my father's place to me, all right," rejoined Roscoe, "and he was so generous. I had the biggest allowance of any boy in college, and I have more to spend now than any chap in town. I——"

"I wish now that I had married you," the girl said very softly. "It would have pleased him."

"I told you that," said Roscoe rather sulkily; "but that chap Sharp has sort of got you locoed, I think. Wouldn't trust him myself, what with his infernal machines and the queer way he has of looking you inside-out and his fads for gruesome things. He and Dorky should team up."

Pearl suddenly sat erect. "That's the man we must have," she announced. "He will know about—about—Guardy."

"No doubt," Roscoe laughed, an unpleasant edge on his voice.

"What do you mean?" Pearl glanced at him sharply, then, maternally, she took in the markings of tears on his young, handsome face, the clenched hands at his side, the whole rigidity of his body.

"Here's the coroner, Mr. Creighton," announced Sergeant Flaherty.

The coroner entered with the air of pomposity for which he was notorious—a pomposity which concealed, however, an amazing cleverness. He was short, stoutish, red of face and shrewd of eye. His physician, Doctor Shultze, was almost his exact facsimile, save for an added geniality of bearing.

They did their work quickly, minutely and thoroughly. Finally the coroner arose and drew his physician into a corner of the room. They conferred in an undertone, then the coroner turned to the two young people still huddled on the divan.

"There must be a closer examination of the body," he announced. "We must ask Miss Anthony to leave the room; Mr. Creighton may remain, if he wishes. It is customary."

Roscoe trembled. "I'd rather not," he faltered.

The coroner eyed him a bit sternly.

"As you please," he snapped out curtly, and turned to the body again.

Left alone, the coroner departed from the body and wandered about the room.

"This will tell nothing to me," he observed to Doctors Shultze and Dunbar. "I am far from an antique fancier, and if there be anything sinister in this motley collection, I do not know it."

Half an hour later Roscoe and Pearl were resummoned. The coroner greeted them with an evidently baffled expression upon his countenance.

"There is positively no sign of violence on the body," he said; "but we bear out Doctor Dunbar's statement that death did not come as the result of natural causes."

Roscoe broke in nervously.

"Isn't there any mark on the—the body, coroner?" he asked. "He must have died of—of something."

The coroner smiled; when he smiled his mouth twisted up at the corners in a sardonic manner.

"Yes," he agreed; "one generally does die of something."

Pearl had re-entered the room while they were talking. She had quieted in the interval, and changed her gingham-checked frock for a simple little gown of black silk. She looked a very charming, a very lovable picture of pathos. In spite of the stern presence of unaccounted-for death, all four men in the room looked at her with an admiring appraisal, and Roscoe's blue eyes took on a hint of returning animation.

Suddenly there was an exclamation from Doctor Shultze.

"Ah," said the coroner's physician, famed for the penetrative truth of his pronouncements, "what have we here? Look here, coroner; see here, Dunbar—right where my hand is—here. That's right. What do you make of it?"

The coroner arose from his knees and looked at his hand closely. Then Doctor Dunbar kneeled and ran his hand through the professor's thick, raven locks to where Doctor Shultze directed his fingers.

"Good God!" he exclaimed.

"What do you make of it?" shot back the coroner, eyeing his physician with considerable excitement.

"I'll have to have more light, and a closer look," returned Shultze. "Will Mr. Creighton draw up the blind by the window near him?"

Roscoe shot out his arm, and, in his nervous grasp of the cord, the curtain flew up with a bang and a rattle.

Pearl gave a little scream. Roscoe muttered a perturbed oath.

Doctor Shultze shot a look at Roscoe.

"It's all right," he said sharply, and bent to his task.

It was fully five moments before he arose. His eyes had the sleuth's look they bore when he was on the trail of the betraying wound or substance on the corpse.

"There is a bluish bruise behind and slightly above the right ear," he said, "and the bruise is depressed."

CHAPTER THREE.

THE CORONER GIVES HIS VERDICT

THERE was a tense silence in the strange room. Even the curios seemed waiting and listening. Outside the door there came the sound of confused whisperings and retreating footsteps. Evidently the servants had been listening and had retired to discuss the discovery of the coroner's physician.

"Is—is that what caused the death, sir?" asked Pearl timidly.

"I am not prepared to say," replied Doctor Shultze.

"There is no other indication?" Roscoe asked almost timidly.

"None that we can discover," returned Doctor Shultze; "but there will have to be an autopsy. If we can find nothing in the stomach to indicate a sinister poison, we will have done all within our domain. It will then be a case for the district attorney's office. The chances are, however, that there will be something in the nature of a deposit found in the intestines. Was your—er—guardian anything of a fancier of poisons, Miss Anthony?"

"Why, no, doctor," replied the girl; "he never took the least interest in them, I know. Guardy was always talking about things that interested him, and poisons were never one of them; were they, Roscoe?"

"Never," answered Roscoe definitely; "I've lived with him for nearly ten years, and he never even spoke of them. He was a collector of antiques, as you know—mostly bronzes and coppers and rare jades."

"So I see." The coroner ran his eyes again about the raftered, paneled room, gleaming richly and deeply here and there with heads and torsos and full bodies, placques and urns and various other grotesque bits of copper and bronze. On shelves were arranged by the careful hand of the loving collector rare bits of jade, ranging everywhere from ultramarine blue to the most nauseous green. The curtains were of dull jade velours, and altogether the room had the appearance of a shrine dedicated to the beauties of bronzes, coppers and jades. "It is an excep-

tional and a most beautiful room," he added appreciatively after a pause.

"Uncle loved it," said Roscoe; "most every moment of his day and all of his evenings were spent in it. He has taken trips into the most secret places of the earth in search of a bit of copper or a bronze or a bit of jade he has got track of. He was a tireless collector."

"Doctor, please make a note of this case as No. 4,444."

There followed a little further talk about the removal of the body, and then the coroner and his physician departed, leaving Doctor Dunbar in charge, and with orders that the body must not be disturbed.

Left alone, Pearl and Roscoe sought the living-room, after giving the maid orders that no one was to be admitted.

"There's six reporters on the front stoop, Mr. Roscoe," Matty informed him. "They're all but breaking into the parly, sir."

Roscoe looked suddenly and boyishly savage.

"Tell them we have nothing to say," he snapped; "and if one of them presumes to force his way into this—this house of grief he will be forcibly ejected."

Matty gave him a swift, odd look, shrugged her plump shoulders after her habitual manner, and went out. Roscoe followed her with his eyes.

"Sometimes Matty is quite pretty, isn't she, Pearl?" he asked.

Pearl nodded absently.

"I've been thinking what we must do, Roscoe," she said, "if the coroner decides this to be a case for the district attorney. What does one do in such an event?"

"I know what uncle would wish us to do," the boy said reverently; "he would wish us to drop the matter. He is dead, and he can't come back to us, dear. So what difference does it make what he did die of? Uncle would loathe all this publicity—the newspaper buzzards and the shrieking yellow presses."

Pearl nodded again.

"I know," she said; "but neither would he have wanted to die this way. He—— Why, Roscoe, do you suppose I could ever sleep again in all my life if the coroner pronounced it—it—you know what—and we didn't find out who?"

"No, I suppose not. I couldn't either, Pearl, now that you speak of it. But it will be a frightful strain on you, dearest."

"Not half the strain of not knowing," returned the girl.

"Who could have killed uncle?" asked the boy, as though to himself. "God knows, Pearl, he was the heart of human kindliness to every one."

"It is unimaginable," agreed Pearl; "quiet, interesting, handsome Guardy. Can you conceive of why he never married, Roscoe?"

"I think he loved your mother, Pearl," the boy returned. "My father used to speak to my mother about it, I remember."

"Oh-h," the girl grieved with her eyes, "I'm sorry, of course. I hardly remember my father. I know Guardy took a trip with him once, and I went along. We went to India. Guardy found some marvelous jades in one of the filthy old bazaars there, and father took a trip by himself, and after that I came to live with Guardy, and I've never seen my father since. He got the wanderlust, I think Guardy said, and has never returned. I—I hope I made up to him for my mother a little; I loved him so much."

"I know you did, Pearl of pearls," answered the boy, taking in the soft whiteness of her covetously, "else he would never have wished so for our marriage. Uncle was pretty fond of me, you know."

"Of course." Pearl pressed his cold hand fondly, then she sighed.

Roscoe bent nearer her and held her troubled eyes.

"Thinking of Deegan Sharp again, aren't you?" he asked. "If it were not for that fellow, you and I would be married and happy to-day, and uncle would probably be alive and happy, too. You know he never cared for Deegan Sharp."

"He liked Deegan," defended the girl, still half-troubulously.

Roscoe grunted.

"He liked him like he liked old Dunbar," he declared, "and not even like that. He liked Deegan Sharp because he was interested in all sorts of queer things—jades and all that stuff, too, because he was up on all sorts of isms and osms. He liked him sort of like a disembodied mind. He did not like him for you. You know that, Pearl."

"I think, though, Roscoe dear, that that was only because he did want you for me," returned Pearl thoughtfully. "I believe that he did like Deegan very much. Of course, he wanted to connect us all more closely—you and I and himself."

"Well, he didn't like Deegan Sharp!" protested Roscoe, boyishly stubborn.

Pearl was still for a while. The name or the presence of Deegan Sharp always had an odd, stilling effect upon her. She always had a sense of being isolated—alone with him—and an added sense of being inconceivably glad of it. Yet she believed, too, that she loved Roscoe. Of course, she couldn't talk to Roscoe—or, rather, he couldn't talk to her—as Deegan Sharp could. But then, not many people could talk like Sharp. He knew everything, and what he didn't know he could inevitably find out.

At this point in her reflections, Pearl ejaculated:

"Nevertheless, one does do something in a case like this, maybe, and we must call in Deegan Sharp. He will know."

"He knows too much," said Roscoe sullenly, "and I'll have something to say about calling that chap in, and so will the district attorney. You leave it all to me, Pearly gates, and I'll arrange everything as you and uncle would wish it. But I wish we knew the outcome of the autopsy. Gad, how this is getting on my nerves! I swear that I'll go mad if they don't come to some sort of a conclusion. Isn't the law an abominably slow machine!"

"You are wanted on the phone, sir," announced Matty at the door.

"Thank goodness for some action!" Roscoe jumped to his feet and almost ran from the room.

When he returned, rather white and shaken, Pearl questioned him with her eyes, her lips too stiff with fear to speak.

"What did he say?" she finally got out.

Roscoe lit a cigarette before he answered. His slight hand trembled like an old man's. The poor lad was getting something similar to an attack of "trench-tremors."

"Oh, it wasn't from the coroner's office," he said; "it was——"

"Yes; it was—who?" almost snapped Pearl.

"It was Central," said the distraught boy, "saying 'My mistake; 'scuse please.'"

Then he threw himself face down upon the floor and burst into his first real tears—a veritable floodgate of tears—that racked his slight body and strangled in his throat.

Dorky came in and petted and soothed him like the mother she had never been to a babe she had yearned over. Matty stood in the doorway, and Pearl could have sworn that she sneered; and, yes, the girl was distinctly pretty.

It was Pearl herself who finally answered the phone.

"Miss Anthony?" came over the wire. "This is the coroner's office. We wish to report—are you there?—we wish to report as the coroner's verdict—'Murder; cause unknown.'"

CHAPTER FOUR

SUSPECTS

"IS Miss Anthony at home to anybody?"

It was the day after the interment. After the morbid excitement of the funeral, the waving off of reporters and the arranging and final termination of the melancholy rites, the modest house on Bleecker street had settled down into a semblance of old time-ordered

quiet—the quiet it had worn respectably and happily before death reached forth with an invisible hand and snatched from it its dearest and its ruling inmate.

Matty smiled at him with a typical and utterly correct mourner's smile.

"I imagine she'd be at home to you, Mr. Sharp," she said. "I'll announce you, sir."

"That's very nice," smiled Deegan Sharp.

Pearl was alone, and when Matty announced Mr. Sharp, she sprang up, knocking off some ivory from her dressing-table in her palpable excitement.

"I'll see him, Matty," she said, "and, Matty, when Mr. Roscoe comes in, steer him up to the den. He is so nervous, you know, and Mr. Sharp is more of a stranger to him than he is to me—you understand?"

"Perfectly, miss," returned the maid with rather unnecessary emphasis.

Down in the formal parlor Deegan Sharp waited with an impatience that he yet held, as he held most of his emotions, in leash. Emotions with Deegan Sharp were like the play of whipcord muscles under the smooth skin of a man's arm; they were there, but they were covered.

In appearance he was tall, exceedingly slight, with a grace that was the restless, resilient grace of the tiger, and with a certain vividness of motion of his hands. His hair was almost black, and his eyes were an exceptional slate gray, seldom seen, and always extraordinary. One knew from the man's appearance that one was not dealing with the hoi polloi, and only when he smiled genuinely, sweetly, unreservedly, with no concealments, with nothing to conceal, did one know with whom and what one was dealing—a man who might have earned the title of "Love o' women."

"How are you, Deegan?" Pearl had come up behind him, and, as he turned to face her, she gave him her hand.

Deegan Sharp took the hand, and then, not contented with that, he took the other. He led her to a couch in the corner—a spindly affair of green silk and gold wood—and seated her with gentle force.

"You are white!" he said anxiously, "and tired and tormented. Can you tell me about it? I was away the day it happened, you know. Yesterday I was here, and my heart broke for you; and to-day I am here, as you see. Now, tell me, if you can."

"There is nothing to tell, Deegan," sighed Pearl, "outside of what you probably know already. The papers have most of it, and much that is quite foreign to us.

"Matty went into the antique room to dust before breakfast, as usual, and found Guardy on the floor—dead. He had been dead, the coroner said, most of the night, at least eight hours."

"Did they find nothing else?"

"A bluish bruise at the right side of his head," the girl said almost apathetically; "but they don't attach so very much importance to that. It was slightly depressed, and Doctor Dunbar believes it might have been done as he fell, and then he might easily have rolled over on his back."

"It would seem," said Deegan Sharp, "that if he lived even long enough to turn over he would have made some sort of outcry, some sort of a disarrangement. Professor Creighton was almost abnormally in control of his faculties, as you well know."

"Yes, I know."

"And the autopsy?"

"Told nothing."

"They are positive there was no natural cause?"

"Absolutely positive."

"H'm!" There was a brief pause, then Deegan asked abruptly:

"And what of Roscoe?"

"He is terribly broken; he adored Guardy."

"Is he home?"

"Not just now; he will be any moment. The district attorney is sending Inspector Welmore and the assistant district attorney to start their investigations. It seems as if it will never all be over, as though we should never be left alone. The grief is bad enough; but this constant——"

"These things are gruelling. I am more sorry than I can state that such a thing should have come to you. Roscoe should not leave you alone for one instant. Isn't he in, well, sort of hurry to be out?"

"He has been very devoted," the girl said dully; "one can't expect him to act like an older man. Roscoe isn't much more than a boy, you know. He takes it as a boy would."

"Still," said Deegan Sharp irrelevantly, "I am glad he doesn't stay in all the time, even with Dorky."

"Dorky detests me," observed Pearl with a shudder. "I catch her looking at me in the strangest way. Sometimes I think"—she lowered her voice and plucked at her black gown fitfully—"sometimes I think that she thinks I did it. Oh, they are unbearable to me—her horrid, suspicious eyes!"

They found themselves before a narrow slit of a door.

For the first time the girl's half-comatose condition broke and tears choked her speech. Deegan Sharp swore under his breath, then he repossessed himself of the icy cold little hands.

"That is monumental absurdity," he said; "almost ludicrous. You must be imagining most of it; in such a time as this your imagination will do considerable, and very poor, work. You must keep your grip, dar—Pearl, I mean. That is the one essential—the one absolutely essential thing. Keep your grip."

"Pearl!" called the excited voice of Roscoe from the

hall, "Pearl, Inspector Welmore is here, and the assistant district attorney. They want us all up in the antique room."

"Mr. Sharp is with me," called back Pearl. "Shall he come along?"

There was a pause; then the voice returned sullenly: "I'll see."

Deegan Sharp smiled.

"Roscoe makes a dog-in-the-mangerish lover, doesn't he?" he asked.

Before she could reply the voice came down again, tinged this time to the critical ear with a suspicion of triumph:

"All right, Pearl; bring Mr. Sharp with you."

There was an oddly assorted group in the jade and bronze and copper antique room. Inspector Welmore was a spare, nervous-looking man, with hair growing perceptibly thin at the temples and smallish, hawk-like gray eyes. The assistant district attorney was tall, well-groomed and with the flavor of the most favored type of the man-about-town. He seemed to be cognizant of his own importance and had the manner—it might have been only a mannerism born of his work—of being consistently suspicious of every one and everything.

Beside the inspector and his superior there was a reporter from *The Earth*, lounging with every appearance of camouflaged disinterest in an obscure corner; but Deegan Sharp, who knew him to be *The Earth's* star reporter and a very gorgon for "scoops," noted that his eyes, under their listless lids, were fairly devouring the room, the occupants of the room and all things appertaining thereto. He noted further that his gaze held longest on the boyish face of Roscoe Creighton.

For the rest there were Pearl and Roscoe, Dorky the giantess, Matty and Deegan Sharp.

The assistant district attorney was asking stereotyped questions of Matty as to the position of the body, the time she discovered it, the length of time between the discovery and her imparting of the news, to whom she first imparted it, etc.

Matty was replying with some trepidation and not inconsiderable self-import. She was in the limelight for the first time, so to speak. And who knew but what it would be the last?

As the assistant district attorney was making his queries, Sergeants Flaherty and O'Donnell came in, and the queries were gone over again and confirmed by them.

By that time Doctor Dunbar arrived, and he was cross-questioned as to his absolute certainty that the professor had not died from a natural cause.

"Well," observed the assistant district attorney when the doctor had finished a discursive account, "that much is conclusive. This thing must be solved. Death does not come to a man without leaving on his person some token of its coming. Now for the members of the household."

He turned to Matty.

"How long have you been in the professor's employ?" he asked.

"Four months come the twelfth; no notice given and none asked," she replied demurely.

Roscoe glanced up at her and frowned. Sergeant O'Donnell pulled at his mustache and smiled. He approved her with that smile and thought of his lonely rooming-house of nights——

"Where do you sleep?" continued the attorney, thus coinciding with the sergeant's conjugal reverie.

Matty bridled.

"I sleeps home nights—No. 16 Coombs place," she said with virtuous asperity, "and there's none that can say else. I'm a good, careful girl, and I has a character written and known."

"You sleep at home every night?" probed the attorney further. "Did you sleep at home on the night preceding the morning on which you found the professor dead?"

Matty bridled again. She began to look injured.

"I makes no slips in my virtues," she said. "I hold as them what slips has no claims to that which they has lost."

The attorney turned to Dorky.

"Do you confirm this affidavit?" he asked.

"She's speakin' the truth," replied the Welsh woman stonily, "and as for the last, I only subscribes to what I understands."

"You may go," said the attorney to Matty Tillish.

Matty, looking set back, minced out. Here, she thought, was but one time more where virtue was uninteresting.

At the door she turned a bit and flashed another of her mysterious looks at Roscoe. This time he caught it, and reddened painfully.

The attorney turned to Dorky, who had stood throughout like some creature transmuted to stone.

"How long have you been in the employ of the late professor?" he asked.

"I have worked for Professor Creighton thirty years. I enjoyed his confidence; I deplore his death." The speech was delivered phonographically.

"Were you in the house on the night the murder took place?"

"No, sir. If I had a-been there would a-been no murder. I watched the professor. I never slept in thirty years till he was in his bed and snoring. I generally went the rounds once an hour. I got that from my ancestors. They was all watchmen. Some was keepers of a lighthouse."

"Where were you then?"

"There's a woman down the East Alley had a brat. I'm something of a midwife, what with all the rest of things. The mother died."

"And the baby?"

"Died, too. It was all straight enough. Doctor Frank Beeley of Foundling Hospital has the records. Them's my alibi; and there's one alibi more. This are no lawful alibi. I know enough about crimes and the dealings of the law to know this; but I want to stand on record as saying it. I wouldn't a-murdered him, not if all the earth vomited up its gold and silver and jewels, not if God above was to take away my chances of heaven; no, not for my babe at my breast. I wouldn't a-harmed a hair o' his head, and I'd a-squeezed the blood out o' the skinny throat of any one that would."

That was the longest speech the Welsh woman ever had made, or ever made again.

The assistant district attorney probed her again, this time with his already publicized eyes.

"You may go," he said at length. "You will be here if we should want you again?"

"I live here," said the Welsh woman, and left the room, her heavily starched black alpaca crackling about her mammoth proportions like shaved stone.

"Quite moving," observed Inspector Welmore.

"A type," concurred the assistant district attorney.

Over in his corner, *The Earth's* star reporter lit his tenth cigarette and coughed his tobacco cough.

"Now, Miss Anthony," said the assistant district attorney with the cajolery the law has an accommodating habit of showing to women, "suppose you answer a few impertinent questions—just as a matter of form?"

Pearl smiled a sad, forced little smile.

"I shall be glad to answer anything that will help to clear this up," she said.

"First-rate. Then, how long have you lived with the professor?"

"For ten years, ever since I was ten years old."

"Are your parents both dead?"

"My mother is dead; she died at my birth."

"And your father?"

"He travels."

"Ah, I see. And just visits you periodically, or spasmodically? Sort of makes his headquarters here, perhaps?"

"No; he never comes here. I haven't seen him for the ten years I have been here. I really know very little about him."

"Ah! Have you any address, any communications from him?"

"No, sir."

"Has it never seemed strange to you, Miss Anthony, that your own father should suddenly vanish from your side at the age of ten and literally give you to another man?"

"I suppose it does seem strange to an outsider; but I have grown so used to it that I never think of it, or of him. It has grown with my growth. Guardy was all the father I ever cared for."

Pearl struggled with her emotions, and the accommodating attorney waited the outcome with a properly sympathetic expression on his handsome face.

Roscoe watched her nervously, almost irritably. Deegan Sharp moved a step nearer her.

"I am ready," she finally said composedly. "Please go on."

"This is too bad, Miss Anthony," the attorney said; "but the law, you know——"

"Yes, I know; I am anxious for it to end—to be alone."

"Well, then you have no address of your father's, no clue of his whereabouts, no knowledge of whether or no you will ever see him again?"

"None; but I might help you, sir, by saying that I do believe my father was unfortunate in some way, and that that is why he practically gave me to Professor Creighton."

"I see; but you have no knowledge of the—ah—misfortune?"

"None whatever."

"What was his business when you were a child?"

"He was a collector of bronzes and also a dealer in them, I believe. He traveled considerably, mostly in India. The last time the professor went to India they went together. That was the time the professor brought me home with him to stay. I wanted to come. My father was ill, and very irritable to me. We left him abroad."

"In India?"

"In Darjiling."

"And you have never heard from him since?"

"Never."

"Well, Miss Anthony, that will do for the present. Only one thing more; I understand that you have an independent and quite a substantial income. Is that correct?"

"That is correct; my father gave the professor about fifty thousand dollars when he took me home. It has been invested and has more than doubled. Five years ago my mother's only sister died, childless and a widow, and left me her money and considerable real-estate."

"Then you estimate your income at, say, approximately——"

"Over five hundred thousand dollars," said Pearl disinterestedly.

"Thank you," smiled the assistant district attorney; "your answers have been full, convincing and very clear. You may go, if you wish."

"I had rather remain, if you please," answered Pearl, and as she spoke her eyes rested anxiously on Roscoe. The maternal look was in them again.

Deegan Sharp had crossed the room after a cursory examination of the bronzes and coppers already familiar to him, and was talking to the nonchalant reporter from *The Earth*, who flipped him a card, bearing the inscription, "Burch Burke."

"Now for Mr. Creighton," said the assistant district attorney, and he smiled again, almost as kindly as he had smiled at Pearl.

But the smile was lost on Roscoe. He had fainted.

CHAPTER FIVE

ROSCOE MAKES AN ACCUSATION

THE efforts of Pearl, Doctor Dunbar, Dorky—gutturably solicitous—and the thus-delayed attorney failed to resuscitate Roscoe. It was five hours later that he emerged from his protracted swoon. He awoke to find Dorky's face bent protectively over him on one side and Doctor Dunbar's bent gravely over him on the other. He essayed a smile.

"That was a bad time to faint, wasn't it?" he asked.

"I have known more favorable occasions for a faint," admitted the physician; "however, there is no real harm done. Rest quietly now until morning, and then you will have an ample opportunity to make your affidavit."

"Where is Pearl?"

"In bed, sleeping. I detailed Matty to remain all night with her. Mr. Sharp took her for a short walk after dinner, and it seemed to do her good."

Roscoe turned his head to the other side and rested it against Dorky's broad, flat chest. A beatific look overspread her gaunt countenance.

"Rest easy, my lamb, my lamb," she crooned.

The following noon Inspector Welmore arrived alone.

"I have been commissioned to take charge of the case," he said proudly to Deegan Sharp, who was again in evidence; likewise Burch Burke, looking as though he was still bored with all existence, and the Creighton mystery especially and particularly.

Roscoe appeared, looking pale and interesting in a violet and white-striped lounging-robe. Pearl sat on an ottoman in a corner, watching him anxiously mother-wise. He had begged to have Dorky come in, too.

"She is so interested, and she has always been one of the family," he told the inspector. "Uncle made a terrible fuss of her."

The inspector seemed eager to begin. It had been a long time since he had handled a really sensational crime. The Creighton affair was being given the devil of a lot of publicity. The professor had been ace-high in his line—an authority on coppers and bronzes—a linguist and a millionaire; also, his name was one of the proudest in the country. Newspapers had always chronicled, head-lined and double-spaced the doings, big and little, of the Eustace Creightons. For a Creighton to be dead—to be murdered—and to be murdered by an agency unknown—the press battened on it!

Obviously it meant coming into vogue again for Inspector Welmore. It was a new "chance"—just when he had thought his chances were foresworn. It went to show that the service didn't overlook faithful men—didn't discard them for younger and brighter generations. Inspector Welmore meant to make the most of his chance. He meant to allow nothing to stand in his way as the sleuth. That had been his trouble in the old days. He had been too pitiful, too compassionate. There had been the De La Rue case, back in the late Nineties. He had lost out on that because De La Rue had had baby blue eyes and an angelic smile and a child clinging about her like the Holy Child to the Madonna. It had transpired that Delia had a past as murky as a London fog, and that had not added any prestige to Inspector Wemore; but, well, things would be different now. If this child-faced, broken boy turned out to be his own son he would still prosecute him—ferret out every scrap of evidence—the more incriminating, the better. If this girl should bleed from her heart to death, he would still press on. There should nothing stop him. A man owed that much to himself, to the service and to the State. Murder is murder, no matter how fair, how frail the hand that commits it. So be it.

"Mr. Creighton," he began with his old-time briskness, almost brusqueness, "how long have you been in your uncle's care?"

"Fifteen years, inspector."

"That made you how old when you came to him?"

"Five and a half, to be exact. Pearl and I are the same age."

"I see. You are related to him on your father's side, of course?"

"My father was the professor's only brother."

"Both your father and mother are dead?"

"Yes, sir."

"Have you an independent fortune?"

"No, sir."

"Ah! You expected then to be the heir to the professor's wealth?"

Roscoe flushed, and Pearl's eyes dilated with the fear the terse inquiry brought her. She glanced at Deegan Sharp, and he smiled at her reassuringly.

"I expected nothing from my uncle's will, inspector," Roscoe was saying with a certain dignity not lost on the inspector. "My uncle has often said that he believed no one, particularly a man, should count on dead men's shoes. He also told me often that it was better for me to make my own way—my own millions, if I could—than to sink back into his. He gave me a most munificent allowance while he was living. He said it was his one indulgence—to see Pearl and me have plenty during his life-time; but of course I shall not have that now."

"Has your uncle's will been read?"

"His attorneys have told us that one of the provisions of my uncle's will was to the effect that it should not be read until he had been dead at least two months. I suppose he wanted the possible beneficiaries to exhibit their feelings in the interim."

"Quite so. Do you hold a position?"

"Yes, sir; I am assistant paying-teller at the National Banking Trust."

"And you draw?"

"Twenty-five dollars a week. I expect a raise the first of May."

"Don't you think it probable, Mr. Creighton, that your uncle only made the statements he did—namely, the dead men's shoes, and the fact that you must make your own way—merely to spur you on? Don't you think it highly probable that he would leave his wealth to his only brother's child—keep the family wealth still in the family? Your uncle was eccentric in his hobbies; but, as I understand him, he was absolutely a family man."

"That may be, inspector. You know as much about that as I do."

"I should not say that, Mr. Creighton; and if these questionings seem too personal to you, you must remember that nothing is too personal for the law where a murder is involved."

"I know; but this is very painful to me. My poor uncle would turn in his grave if he could know that I am being even vaguely suspected of anything so horrible as his death."

The boy's voice broke off and his blue eyes filled with sudden tears. Pearl's face whitened. It was hard for her to see him suffer this way—he, who had been all carefreeness, light and youth.

The inspector coughed. He had a son about the age of this lad. He felt the old arch enemy, Compassion, rising up to strangle his set purpose with soft, beguiling fingers.

"Be down!" he admonished her sternly.

There was a tense silence in the room. Dorky glared savagely at the inspector. Had she had her full way, there would doubtless have been a murder done then and there, with no invisibility about it, either.

"Of course," the inspector was saying, "there is no direct evidence thus far in this exceedingly baffling case; the only thing we can go upon at all is motive. We must then proceed to fit the motive to the person, and evolve our theory from that. You, Mr. Creighton, seem the only person concerned who can have the faintest motive for the murder. We are no doubt erring greatly in attributing the motive to you; but you must see for yourself that it is so. No one else is even distantly involved. Therefore I must ask that you be arrested under suspicion until the possible motive be removed. Now, sergeant——"

There was a stir in the room, then Roscoe's voice arose shrilly, menacingly, quivering with outraged pride and hurt.

"I don't mind going with you, inspector!" he cried. "I'd do more than go to jail for my dead uncle's sake; but I can't stand here in cold blood and see the real murderer—the only man who did hate uncle—go scot free! By gad, sir, it's the most outrageous piece of nerve I've ever seen! There, Mr. Inspector, there is the real man to suspect—Deegan Sharp!"

CHAPTER SIX

THE QUESTIONING OF DEEGAN SHARP

"AH-H!"

It was a long-drawn-out exclamation, and the inspector wheeled slowly and faced Deegan Sharp, who had halted in his slow traversing of the room to fix his cynical, slate-gray eyes on the quivering person of his accuser. A smile curved his mouth, almost a smile of pity.

The inspector fixed him with his eye.

"What have you to say, Mr. Sharp?" he queried.

"Only," drawled Deegan Sharp, "that it is ridiculous and amazing. However, I shall be glad to answer any questions you may put."

"I guess," broke in Roscoe, still excitedly, "that you won't be so glad to have uncle's desk searched, in the antique room. There is a letter there that won't make you glad, not by a pipeful!"

"You are raving, Ros," smiled Deegan Sharp, still quietly. "I have never corresponded with your uncle upon any occasion."

Roscoe smiled in a superior manner.

"I've nothing more to say, Sharp," he said. "I authorize the officers to search uncle's desk, that's all. They may find what they may find. If I'm not mistaken, I apologize to you, and I may say, Sharp, that if it hadn't been for the Creighton name, and if you had had the decency to spit out what you know only too well when I was being grilled—well, I'd have stood up for you all right, all right!"

"That's handsome of you, Ros."

"Mr. Sharp would have been questioned anyway, Mr. Creighton," put in Inspector Welmore. He felt a liking for the slender, quiet man with the inscrutable, slatey eyes. Clever, this man, or he missed his guess. Too clever to commit a murder unless—God knew, it was a clever murder—this invisible affair. "How long had you known Professor Creighton, Mr. Sharp?" began the inspector by way of preliminary.

"I've known the professor for about three years, Mr. Inspector," said Sharp, lighting a long, slender pipe and leaning up against the fireplace with lazy grace. "We were most congenial."

"Along what lines?"

"Travel, reading, especially the origin of bronzes, jades and coppers. I've a bit of the collector's craze myself. We took a trip together once into Afghanistan in search of coppers owned by a tribal people."

"How long ago was that?"

"About two and a half years ago."

"Just you and the professor?"

"And Miss Anthony."

"Ah, I see! Where was Mr. Creighton—young Mr. Creighton, here?"

"He was in his senior year at Harvard. He did not accompany us."

"There were never any words between you and the professor?"

"Never anything that might be known as words, inspector."

"But there was some sort of a disagreement?"

"I have the honor, inspector, to be in love with Miss Anthony. Before paying my addresses to her I begged permission of the professor. He told me that he had set his heart on her marrying his nephew, Roscoe. He asked me, as a friend of his, to wait and see whether the two young people, both of whom he loved devotedly, could not come to care for one another. I agreed reluctantly."

"Why reluctantly, Mr. Sharp?"

Deegan Sharp raised his eyebrows with a trace of amusement.

"Because I love her myself, Mr. Inspector," he answered, "and it is the habit of a man to relinquish the woman he is in love with very reluctantly."

"Did you—er—argue with the professor at all—contest your suit, as it were?"

"I told him that I believed it to be the right of every man to endeavor to win for himself the woman he desires with all there is in him. I told him that I could not see the justice of relinquishing the right in my particular case."

"And he said?"

"He said that he saw my side exactly, but that this was really rather a distinct case; he told me of his great love for Miss Anthony's mother, and his loss of her; his subsequent friendship for her father, and the hope that had grown with his years until it was part of his very blood that the daughter of the woman he loved should enter his family by marriage with the nearest approach he had to a son—the son of his brother.

"He clinched his argument in my mind by adding that, unless he was much mistaken, Miss Anthony had already grown to care for Roscoe. He begged of me to wait just a little longer, until the two young people were of age, and that by that time the thing would be decided one way or another. I agreed."

"And was that his only objection to yourself as a suitor?"

"He mentioned only one other fact—that he rather inclined to a nearer similarity in ages. I am approaching my thirty-fourth year."

"And this correspondence of which Mr. Creighton speaks?"

"There has been no correspondence. The professor and I have never had occasion to write; even if we had, we probably would not have taken advantage of it. I am far from prolific with my pen; and he was much the same."

"Do you mean to imply that you have never been out of the city—never away from him any letter-writing distance?"

"He——" Roscoe intercepted, but was silenced by the inspector's admonitory hand.

"I mean to imply nothing of the sort," returned Deegan Sharp. "I have but just returned from a month's trip."

"Ah! When did you return?"

"The day of the funeral."

"Where had you been?"

Sharp paused to light a cigarette this time. In marked contrast to the others who had been interrogated, his long, steel-strong fingers were as steady as stone as they lit the match.

"I had been visiting my mother up-State," he said calmly. "I can supply you with her name, address, and also give you the names and addresses of others with whom I came into contact while up there."

"They may be useful, Mr. Sharp," said the inspector; "but in a murder so baffling as this has been, the guilty party may have done it at a distance—who knows?"

"Who indeed?" returned Deegan Sharp imperturbably.

The inspector turned to Pearl, who sat on her low ottoman, hands clasped tightly in her lap. During the cool recital by Sharp of his hitherto unavowed passion for herself, her pale face had flamed scarlet. Now the scarlet had burned out, leaving her whiter than ashes of roses.

"Miss Anthony," said the inspector with brusque kindliness, "have you—ah—committed yourself as yet to either of these young men?"

"No, Mr. Inspector." Pearl shook her head and blushed again.

"Well, Mr. Sharp," the inspector turned back to Deegan, "as I said before, motive is what we are looking for. There are two primary plans I have of tracking down a crime—one is fitting the person to the motive, the other fitting the motive to the person. Since we have no evidence, circumstantial or otherwise, we must ostensibly have motive."

"Ostensibly," agreed Deegan Sharp.

"Therefore," pursued the inspector, "we will ask that all in this room now remain here while Sergeant O'Donnell and myself search the desk in the antique room. Sergeant!"

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE REWARDS OF THE SEARCH

"HOW does it seem to be going, sor?" queried Sergeant O'Donnell, as his chief seated himself in front of the carved, mammoth desk and began taking out neatly banded piles of letters, bills, receipts and the various papers and impedimenta that go to make up a businessman's paraphernalia.

"I believe that we have two persons with motives to track down to their probable clearance, O'Donnell," rejoined the inspector.

"But if they are clearanced," persisted O'Donnell, "what good is that, sor?"

"Elimination, sergeant," replied the inspector efficiently, "in a case like this—elimination."

"That Welsh giant, sor," went on O'Donnell; "do you loike the looks of her?"

"Can't say she's a tonic to the eye, O'Donnell; but there's honesty printed on that countenance, as plain, O'Donnell, as the map of dear old Ireland is printed on yours."

"Aw, inspector, quit your fooling. I wisht now that she had done the crime; she's a likelier one for the chair than the bonny boy or the foine-lookin' Mr. Deegan Sharp, sor."

"Quite true, O'Donnell, but I've known many a crime come my way dressed up in pink silk and lace, with a face as pretty as one of your sainted martyrs. Can't trust to that, my man."

There was a silence, broken only by the swift movements of the inspector's hands as he opened drawers, unbanded letters, ran through them, banded them again, and took out others.

One packet he read carefully, letter for letter, all the way through.

"H'm!" he said, as he finished.

"What, sor?"

"Letters from Roscoe Creighton to his uncle while at college. Nice, clean, boyish letters, full of athletics, sports, legitimate scraps and jolly affection. Shows the boy's character to be, in this case, like his face. H'm!"

"A—a clearance, sor?"

"Something of the kind, O'Donnell."

There were also some letters from Pearl, which the inspector perused carefully. From these letters he jotted down on his note-book two addresses—one in the city, one at the seashore.

"Women," he mused, "*cherchez la femme*, you know."

There was also some business correspondence—a note evidently written lately, from the National Banking Trust, saying that Roscoe was applying himself, and was learning rapidly. There were stubs of checks, two checks made out, one for Matty and one for Dorky, and two boxes of the professor's engraved cards. There remained one small compartment to examine, and he decided to do this at once.

In this compartment there were three small packets of letters. One proved to be more stubs, all canceled; the other held a miscellany of letters and scraps of paper with memoranda of an uninteresting character. The inspector separated them all carefully. He was palpably disappointed at his lack of evidence. He knew in his heart that a man who had cared for the professor's ward and had amicably agreed to wait while another swain had his chance, and a pampered, boyish, affectionate nephew, who had a munificent allowance in his uncle's life-time, and the likelihood of being penniless, even if the likelihood was far-fetched when said uncle was dead—these two motives were pale and insignificant ones to point to the red hand of murder, adroitly and subtly concealed. To plan such a murder, however, Deegan Sharp was obviously the likely one. Roscoe was a nice, normal boy; he would probably nicely and normally succeed. But he was not subtle, he was not adroit, and the murderer of Eustace Creighton had been both.

The inspector took out the third and last packet. It

bore the same appearance as the second. There was another pause, then——

"Ah-h!" breathed Inspector Welmore.

"Mother of God!" gasped Sergeant O'Donnell in his excitement.

The inspector was reading a greasy, pinkish slip of paper, with hands that were not near so nicely steady as the hands of Deegan Sharp.

It bore an address, and it said in wobbly print:

"Please, old friend, send money here." It was unsigned, but the address was given; it was in Chinatown, and it bore the Chinese name, "Wo Tung Pang."

"O'Donnell," said the inspector breathlessly, "this is a rare find! Keep this quiet. You haven't seen it, of course. You and I, my friend, pay Mr. Wo Tung Pang a visit this evening. Chinatown! Ah, many a murder has come creepingly, yellowly, out of Chinatown! But who in the——"

The inspector paused and opened a thin, double sheet of grayish note-paper. It was covered with a fine, legible script—an original, distinctive hand—and in one corner, in dull purple, were the letters "D. S." This time the inspector nearly had palsy. His mind jumped instantly to the letters. Before he read the signature he knew the writer—Deegan Sharp, the accused. Verily, if this letter was incriminating it would seem that his chances had come again. What fool has said that "Opportunity knocks but once?" Opportunity, when the hand is murder's, knocks with multiple fingers.

O'Donnell, with excitement nearly as great as that of his chief, bent over Welmore's shoulder. This might mean promotion to him. It's an ill wind! The letter ran as follows:

"My Dear Professor Creighton—When we parted last night in ill-concealed anger on both parts, I feel that I did not have my full say in a matter that is dearer than life to me—closer than death—namely, my love for Pearl, your ward. I feel that unless you retract your resolution, I shall have to retract mine, or, well, professor, I am a man laboring under great stress. Happiness is within my very touch, and only you stand between me and it. I can say no more. Deegan Sharp."

When they had finished jointly reading the letter, both men stared into one another's eyes.

"God in heaven!" ejaculated the inspector.

"Shall you compare the hands?" asked O'Donnell.

"Of course, of course! But do you know, O'Donnell, I shall be sorry to arrest Deegan Sharp. There is something after my own heart in the man. I can't help thinking what a value his type would be to the service."

Up-stairs the little group stood almost in the same positions as they had stood when the officials left the room. As the inspector entered, now closely followed by Sergeant O'Donnell, Pearl almost arose from her low place.

Her eyes, in a very anguish of fear, sought the inscrutable eyes of the inspector.

"Mr. Sharp," began that individual, "I should like a specimen of your penmanship."

Deegan Sharp looked faintly surprised.

"Certainly, inspector," he complied.

Sergeant O'Donnell proffered his fountain-pen and a sheet of paper, and Deegan Sharp bent over a table and then glanced up at the anxiously waiting inspector inquiringly.

"Any particular word, or set of words?" he asked calmly.

"Write your name, address and the color of your stationery," ordered the inspector.

Deegan Sharp scribbled a second, then handed the result to the official.

"Deegan Sharp, No. 14 South Oliver street; stationery gray," was what he read.

He coughed slighty, then he turned and faced the room, averting his gaze from the faintly amused eyes of Deegan Sharp.

"Mr. Sharp, you are under arrest," he said.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE JADE JOSS

THE day ended with the arrest of Deegan Sharp, and at nine that night Inspector Welmore and Sergeant O'Donnell set forth for Chinatown.

They had no idea what they were to find there. One never does when one pries into the precincts of the Oriental. There are mysteries there, and the solutions of mysteries almost beyond the ken of man. Even inspectors close on fine clues have never come back, and they in their turn have left no clues.

They found their task, however, easier than they had dared to hope.

"In fact," said Inspector Welmore rather dolefully, "it is all so freely given, address, name and all, that it is probably nothing more than a first-class laundry."

When they arrived at the given address they found themselves before a narrow slit of a door, with the slanted, slit appearance of a Chinaman's eye. It was painted a jade green. They opened it cautiously, anticipating expulsion, and crept up an evilly smelling flight of pitch-black stairs. Half-way up, Sergeant O'Donnell stopped.

"Inspector," he hissed in that creeping worthy's ear, "I've been here before, sor, on the Farrelly case. We found the girl here; her parints never took her back, sor. She was on the black smoke, inspector, and she'd been livin' with a Chink some year or more."

"You mean——" interrogated Inspector Welmore, also in a whisper.

"It's an opium den, sor. They call it 'The Jade Joss.' Clean and half-way respectable it is for the smoke. Some of the highest nibs have fallen to here, and claim as they could fall much deeper. It's run by the Chinks, and of its kind it's run straight."

"Will we be let in?" asked the inspector.

"I will," said the sergeant with modest pride. "I saved the life of the Chink's son once; he's never forgot it. Don't know how the name Wo Tung Pang happened to slip by me. In the excitement of the moment I forgot it; the Farrelly case was sivin years ago. She died afterward, I heard, and old Wo Tung Pang had her buried Chinese fashion when her parents wouldn't even do with the corpse. He runs it dacint, as that goes to prove."

At the top of the third black flight the two men paused. Over another narrow door a gas-jet was sputtering in a green glass shade. By its sickly light the inspector made out the scrawly Chinese hieroglyphics on the door.

"It means, translated free, 'Wo Tung Pang, Chop Suey,'" informed the sergeant, and snickered.

In response to their knocks, footsteps shuffled across the floor, and the door was cautiously opened.

"It's O'Donnell," said the Irishman.

The door was opened a bit wider, and the two men slipped in. They stood a moment blinking in the room filled almost to suffocation with the smoke. Then Welmore glanced at his tentative "host." He saw a tiny, wizened Chinaman, older than his race, older than all his race, yellower than rich ivory, with eyes that seemed mere cuts of a fine knife under his eyebrows, and an abnormally black queue resembling nothing so much as the slicky, slimy tale of a rat. He wore a fearsome and fairly black jacket, gaily, grotesquely embroidered, and his hands were mere withered bits of paper that played with one another nervously. His voice was whiny, nasal, and all but unintelligible.

The inspector was speaking.

"As man to man," he said, "you can do something for me; more, you can do something for the law, and in return the law will do something for you—just now," he added under his breath.

"Velly, velly, velly," was all Welmore could make of his response; but evidently it was assent.

"Then," said the inspector, "you can tell me the name of, and then direct me to, the man who wrote this."

He handed the pinkish, greasy slip of paper to the Chinaman and watched him closely. Wo Tung Pang

chuckled hideously. Welmore noted that his mouth housed two teeth—long, yellow and gleaming. Then the old Chink looked up at him.

"Name An-toll-y," he got out; "on mat by coffin near Joss."

Inspector Welmore started perceptibly; O'Donnell, who felt that he had done his part, merely blinked. But to both men it was certain that Wo Tung Pang meant "Anthony"—Pearl Anthony's mysterious father—the man who had married Pearl Anthony's mother, beloved by the professor, the unaccountable father who had with equal unaccountability abdicated his lovely daughter. Eh, but the smoke does strange things!

Through the thick smoke the inspector and the sergeant found the gaily decorated coffin, within whose gruesome shelter the more gruesome body of Wo Tung Pang was to be shipped back to the land of his ancestors. It looked as though it were hungry for him, as though it had been waiting a long time, as though indeed it would not wait much longer.

A little to the right of it stood the Jade Joss, in whose honor the den had been named. It was an unspeakably hideous idol, once bright with paint and polish, emblazoned in dragons and wonderful in design.

Wo Tung Pang had grown too old now, and the Armenian woman who had had the bunk above the joss and had lived with him had died in that bunk — oh, hundreds and hundreds of weeks ago! No one kept it polished now; there was no one to care; and there are no sticks burnt under his great nose, either; Wo Tung Pang has grown too old, too old. He dusts his coffin, but the joss is neglected.

The girl seemed to be doing most of the talking; her expressions were scornful.

The place might have been clean, as such places go—in his time, Wo Tung Pang had been exceedingly fastidious—but the stink of it now nearly turned the inspector's stomach, and the strange sounds issuing from the mats upon the floor and the bunks along the wall nearly completed the effect.

However, as ran vaguely through the inspector's swimming head, sleuths dare not have stomachs, nerves, hearts nor human feelings. Justice and a brain—that is all.

On the mat—quite a clean mat—at the very foot of the coffin, lay a man in a blue flannel shirt, a pair of quite decent trousers and a string of a necktie. He had his pipe in his mouth and was rolling his own opium pills with feeble, unsteady fingers. His hair was tousled; but it was fair. And as the inspector got on his knees the better to attract his attention and converse with him, he saw that his eyes were clearly blue.

"Are you Mr. Anthony?" he asked firmly and distinctly.

The poor, drug-soaked thing on the mat opened his blue eyes almost to their fullest. He spoke half-amusedly.

"Hundreds of years ago I was that, they tell me," he said; "but it's been hundreds, hundreds and hundreds—one doesn't reckon time with the smoke. It doesn't matten—nothing matters—except that Wo Tung Pang put bran into my smoke. That's an insult. He never would do that when Ali Ali was here—the Armenian who lived with him, you know. Ali Ali liked me; she always gave me the pipe with the jade mouthpiece and the bronze cup. I brought it here myself from India; but they took it away from me. It doesn't matter—no, it doesn't matter; the mats are clean, and I've seen them go out of here, one by one; Ali Ali and the girl whose mother went crazy; the nice chap from college, ruined by women and the smoke. Oh, it doesn't matter, anyhow. After a while nothing but the smoke does matter."

"Mr. Anthony," Inspector Welmore broke in, "didn't you have a little girl at one time and a friend by the name of Creighton?"

"Did I have a daughter? To be sure, long and long ago. Before that I had a wife, deserved of men. She died; after that I took to the smoke just to dream of her—living, not dead, and unable to return my caresses. I didn't go far, just a little ways, to help me out when the pain of her was worst. No one knew it. I just did it in my own house, just quietly, when little Pearl had gone to bed. There was no one but me to put her to bed—back then. I couldn't do it very well. I'd get to thinking of how her mother would have done it—crooned over her. I couldn't stand it. Then I would take the smoke and dream and dream and forget."

"How long did this go on, Mr. Anthony?"

"I forget. One doesn't reckon time with the smoke. Hundreds of years, I tell you. Why do you ask me so often? What does it matter? What does anything matter?"

"Well, Mr. Anthony," the inspector spoke in sharp, incisive tones, "how long have you been here?"

"Time again," complained the poor wretch querulously. "I don't know. Ali Ali would know; Wo Tung Pang won't. He has forgotten time long and long ago. But first I stayed in India in a place called the 'Celestial Gate.' An Englishman was there; but he drank, too. That's bad. One must be true to the smoke. The smoke is a jealous mistress. Ha! Well, I was comfortable there. Then it got filled up with niggers, and the bran they put in your pipe was fierce. So, when the Englishman left, he took me with him. He was going to America; but on the way he got recruited, or something, in that

war they fought a thousand years ago. He said if he could beat the demon rum and defy the devil smoke he could trample on the Hun. He said the Hun was the worst of the three evils. I don't know what he meant. People talk very foolishly after the smoke. Probably he's dead now; I've seen so many of them go."

He seemed to relapse into a dream, and the inspector jogged his elbow. This brought him to, and he arose on the mat, reached out for his pill, and dropped it in the cup—a silver one, with strange beasts crawling up and down the receiver bottle below the cup.

"And then?" he asked. "Oh, and then, why, I got over here. I quit the smoke for years, I think. I made up my mind I would have Pearl again. Pearl would be able to go to bed herself by now. She would not be reminding me of her dead mother. Perhaps she might even make me forget. A woman can make the devil of a mess of a man's life—the very devil of a mess. I was weak, I suppose, too weak, and my love was too strong, for it rose up and destroyed me. Well, it doesn't matter. Still, after a little I came here. A sailor brought me. I've been here ever since. I never go out now, and I never shall."

"How long has it been since you were out?" questioned the inspector.

"He hasn't been out for six months. Why don't you leave off questioning him?" came a strident, once musical, woman's voice from a bunk directly over Anthony's head.

The inspector glanced up at her. She had been pretty once, even beautiful. Her hair hung in matted wisps about her face now; her large eyes were hollow, and her white skin was wrinkling like fine tissue.

"How do you know?" snapped the inspector.

"I know because I watch him. The smoke doesn't touch me so much, either. I just doze off bits here and now; but then, even that's better than being hell-awake and suffering all the time. Besides, he's going out soon. Gawd A'mighty, can't you tell that, with those ferret's eyes of yours? He couldn't wobble down the stairs of this hole, not for salvation from the smoke, and heaven knows he wouldn't for that. Then there's another reason. I watch over him to see that he gets the pipe he wants and no bran mixed in. It's the only thing that bothers him now—the bran in his smoke. It bothers him fearful, and I was in his world once, till a man floored me, knocked the guts out of me, made it hell on earth for me to remember the accursed name of him. He—down there—he looks like him; but that's a woman for you. I loved him. Oh, I did love him! Well, as he says, it doesn't matter. Good old smoke, it doesn't matter now."

O'Donnell drew a deep breath. It sort of "got" a chap—the things one learned in these dives—made one rest unaisy o' nights." He looked to see how the inspector was taking it. The inspector was resolutely sleuth; but he was doing a desperate battle with his compassion. He felt a mighty drawing away from this deep sink of human miseries and pains, from these battered, dismembered things—mangled, twisted, driven to ends by life. And of these drivers, the greatest of all is love—the love of a woman for a man.

"Could you swear to the fact," the inspector was asking the woman, "that Mr. Anthony has not left here in six months?".

A strident laugh answered him.

"Sure I'd swear," mocked the answering voice. "But what good is that? In the smoke one swears to anything. But sure, I swear!"

"So do I," drawled another voice, and out of the murk an ancient crone raised her head. "It's straight enough," she cackled.

The inspector turned to Anthony again.

"Just one question more," he said half-apologetically. "Who has been sending you the money to keep you here?"

"Stacey Creighton," the poor victim said dully. "Once he used to come here—long ago. Twice he took me out; but I got away. Then he knew there was no use. He knew it was too late. So he sent me my money—sent it each month; sent it reg'lar. Only once I asked for more; I needed a pipe. The old one was most gone, I'd used it so."

"Mr. Creighton is dead," announced the inspector solemnly.

The woman above grasped the import of the statement; Anthony did not. She leaned down out of her bunk once more.

"I've enough for the both of us," she said; "leave him be. He can't do harm; he's not got the strength of a rabbit, and hasn't had for the last year. Leave him to the smoke. He dreams sweet."

The inspector and the sergeant tiptoed from the room. Once more in the fresh air, the inspector rubbed his coat across his eyes.

"Phew!" he exclaimed.

Sergeant O'Donnell was crossing himself.

CHAPTER NINE

BURCH BURKE WAKES UP

IT was two days later when Burch Burke handed Inspector Welmore his highly decorative card from *The Earth* and asked to see Deegan Sharp, sojourning behind the bars.

"You know, Welmore," he said, smiling sweetly, "I've tipped you to a few." He bent over and whispered in the inspector's ear. That dignitary colored good-humoredly and shook his head.

"You're a precocious brat," he said, not without affection; "also, you're damned fresh. But I suppose it is a combination of these two faculties that has won you your scoops. You've done some sensational things, sonny."

"Yes, and I'm not through yet," rejoined the precocious brat modestly. "In fact, I'm in my cradle. But first tell me, inspector, how'd you come off in Chinatown the other night?"

"How'd you know we were in Chinatown?" snapped the inspector suspiciously.

"Am I covering the Creighton murder, or am I not?" queried *The Earth's* star reporter blandly.

"You are!" rejoined the inspector fervently.

"Then, oh pride of the police," quoth Burch Burke flippantly, "I pulled a wire and found that you were hieing to the Chink dump. I thereupon departed for the Jade Joss and was having my quiet pipeful when you and O'Donnell put the poor dopes through your merry third degrees."

"But how," persisted the inspector, "did you know to go to the Jade Joss?"

"My man," lamented Burch Burke, "before this interview is over I feel in my bones that you are going to know as much as I do. However, I want to see Deegan Sharp, for whom, as a murderer or as a keeper of the peace, I have the profoundest admiration."

"Why?" broke in the inspector curiously.

"Because he looks as though he does not sit upon his brains," declaimed Burch flippantly.

"I agree with you," affirmed the inspector; "but then, my dear boy, the man who has committed this murder does not precisely, as you say in your astonishing vernacular, 'sit upon his brains.'"

"Quite true, inspector, and I am not acquitting Deegan Sharp of murder. That is up to you. I made an innocent comment on his general appearance, and requested an interview. Do I get it?"

The inspector looked doubtful.

"He probably wouldn't talk," he considered.

"I am a lively youngster," broke in Burch irrelevantly, "and I go about a great deal. I may have some tips, and I can give them to the boss, or I can keep them quiet and pass them on to Inspector Welmore."

"But tell me first," reverted the inspector, "how you knew to go to the Jade Joss?"

"There was a time," reminisced Burch Burke, "when I came upon Professor Eustace Creighton assisting a dear friend from the Jade Joss. I was in charge of another affair entirely, and I just stumbled on this. It struck me as a great thing—the exclusive, aristocratic, ultra-fastidious professor of coppers, jades and bronzes digging his scholarly hands in the filth of the opium dens of Chinatown. I got an interview out of him. I never published it. I was soft and impressionable. I thought the public could do without one more tale of a poor devil's miseries; so I shut up. But I filed it for further reference, and the miracle is explained."

The inspector considered.

"Don't know how the commish will take it," he said; "but go ahead. I'm in charge of the Creighton mystery, which is Case 4,444, and I see no reason why *The Earth* shouldn't have a statement from the suspected murderer. I'll have a trusty take you to the tier where Sharp is locked up."

As Burch Burke followed the trusty out of the headquarters office he rolled his tongue in his cheek.

"*The Earth* isn't going to get this just yet," he muttered to himself; "I'm doing a little ferreting on my own account, and I like Deegan Sharp."

They soon came to the cells.

"'Lo, Sharp."

Deegan looked up from his morning paper and nodded pleasantly.

"'Morning," he returned; "Mr.——"

"Burch Burke, reporter from *The Earth*," replied the youth glibly.

"Well, Mr. Burke, I hope you haven't come for the 'murderer's farewell,' because, honestly, I haven't one."

"Nope. Have a cig?"

"Yes; thanks."

Deegan Sharp reached his slender hand from behind the bars and helped himself.

"I haven't come for any murderer's farewell, Mr. Sharp," returned Burch Burke in a half-whisper; "in the first place, because I know you did not commit the murder, and in the second place, because I am no sob sister. I leave all that to the females of the species, *et al.* I've graduated. I did come to ask you how long it has been since you were in your shop at the top of your house?"

"Over a month," said Deegan Sharp.

"Huh! Question second and last, what's your hobby?"

"Machinery and criminology."

"Right; 'by for the present. I've a hunch."

Whereupon the amazing youth departed.

He was back by noon, asking to see the commissioner. Whatever he said to that worthy, not even *The Earth* has ever found out; but the result was that Deegan Sharp was let out on bail that night to pursue certain investigations that might clear up the Creighton mystery, and incidentally the blood from his own hands. The detective bureau was called in, and Detective James detailed to keep his eye on Deegan Sharp.

Immediately the doors opened upon Deegan Sharp, he and Burch Burke walked to an obscure café and sat down to lunch.

"Mr. Sharp," began the reporter abruptly, "as I told you, I know you didn't do this thing. I'm a newspaper man and I can read faces. I knew when I first saw you that you were no murderer; also, I've a couple of hunches, as I also told you. They may, or they may not, result in clearing up some muffled affairs. There's a dirty stench to this affair, and it's got my goat. Now, I can have the hunches and all that, but when it comes down to technicalities, when it comes to the ropes in the Creighton household and the intimate lay of the land, I'm not there. In fact, I'm across the ocean hobnobbing with the Hohenzollerns, father and son. You will be there. I knew you were interested in criminology, and I wondered why you hadn't gotten busy before.

"My first hunch will be, I am almost sure, of practically no importance whatever. However, just because it is a hunch, and because she is the only person we know of outside of the family, we had better give her a little third degree. Her name is Mrs. Gerry Stevens, and she was at one time a very intimate friend of the professor's."

On their way to the home of Mrs. Stevens, Burch asked Deegan whether he had ever imagined the professor might have died by his own hand.

"I know that he did not," replied Deegan Sharp. "In the first place, he hadn't a reason in the world; in the second place, he was bitterly contemptuous of the moral coward who took his own life, and in the third place, he had not a trace of melancholia, not a pessimistic hair on his head."

Mrs. Stevens greeted them pleasantly but gravely. She was a handsome, striking little woman of about the professor's own age—some forty-five or more. Her abundant perfectly coiffed hair was turning slightly gray, but her clear, reddish skin was youthful and well-preserved.

"We have come," began Deegan Sharp, with his gracious reserve of manner, winning to men and compelling to women, "to find out whether you can give us any information about the death of Professor Creighton."

The gravity deepened on her face, that was all.

"I wish that I could," she said regretfully, in a pleasant contralto voice; "it was a shock to me, as the death of a dear, dear friends always is. But I am afraid that I can give you no help. I haven't seen the professor in nearly ten years."

"Were you not," asked Deegan Sharp, "very—ah—very friendly with him at one time?"

Mrs. Stevens smiled. Her perfect poise did not desert her for an instant.

"You police are so dreadfully and intimately inquisitive," she said, then turning grave again; "but, yes, of course, I must help you all I can. One cannot think of self in a time like this. Yes, Professor Creighton and I were very intimate; we were more than that. Need I be franker?"

"You need not," replied Deegan Sharp with an answering smile; "and there is but one more question. Why did you and the professor break off your friendship?"

"We broke off our entirely delightful friendship," returned Mrs. Stevens, "as a matter of the most amicable agreement. A little girl came back with him on one of his trips to live with him, and, by a strange coincidence, the man I had loved long years ago returned also on the same steamer. He came into my life again, and I married him."

"I see," said Deegan Sharp.

"We have one son," continued Mrs. Stevens, still in her equable cultured voice, "and while my friendship with Professor Creighton was as fine and intellectual as ever it was tender, I had rather my son grow up in ignorance of it until such time as he is in a position to judge of a lonely woman and a lonely man—both congenial, both in the prime of life. My husband agrees with me."

"You may rest assured, Mrs. Stevens," replied Deegan Sharp, taking her hand and bowing over it, "that this will be kept strictly *entre nous*. We thank you, and regret that we have had to annoy you. Good-day."

"Now, you see!" exclaimed Burch Burke, when they had been dropped to the hall in the lift and were walking east again; "you see! If I had interviewed her I'd have done it in some such lingo as 'Come across, kid; why'd you shake your bloke?'"

Deegan Sharp laughed.

"You're impossible enough, son," he said; "don't make it any worse. But you may rest assured that this particular hunch of yours is cleared up and dismissed. Take the word of a criminologist—Mrs. Stevens and crime are not pals. She is a finely balanced woman and as equable as her speech. She reeks not of the murk of murder, nor of the intricacies thereof."

"Give me the gentleman detective, though," mused Burch Burke enviously, as he appraised the slender, aristocratic figure of Deegan Sharp. "Gee, the force has lost one in you—fact."

"The question at hand," interrupted Deegan Sharp, "is not my gentlemanly detectiveness, but your second hunch."

"That," said the star reporter, "inhabits your shop at the top of your house."

CHAPTER TEN

THE SECOND HUNCH

DEEGAN SHARP dwelt in one of a row of uninteresting-looking houses on an uninteresting block—one of those houses and one of those blocks to be found in every city—about fifteen in a row, red brick with brownstone steps and a sort of a landing. A balcony built of corrugated iron, twisted out of all semblance to its original stern state. One could not conceive that anything dissimilar took place in any one of the houses. One could have sworn that the same people lived the same lives in the same way in each and every one of them. One would even have been conscious of surprise to see one type of person issue out from one numbered dwelling and another type from another. The only dissimilarity indeed were the numbers, and the curtainings to be seen from the tall, gaunt windows.

"Speaking residentially," quipped Burch Burke, "you're a novel duck!"

Deegan Sharp sought his number and laughed.

"Still," he said, "there's something fitting in being known only by number."

"You take the thing coolly," said the reporter, and he gave him a curious stare.

Newspaper-work had inculcated in Burch Burke, as it had in Inspector Welmore with his work, a native distrust. He liked Deegan Sharp—liked him tremendously; didn't believe for one instant that he had murdered Professor Creighton; yet so intricate are the involutions of the creature known as man, so many reserves has he, so many subtleties, so many escapes—one cannot tell.

And there was the shop at the top of the house, with part of its equipment gone! Burch Burke had not at all understood the mysterious machines he had glanced over in Deegan Sharp's littered workshop. He had not even faintly comprehended what they were for; but as newspaper men have general information on every one and everything, he had known, as most every one knew, that Deegan Sharp was the inventor of ingenious devices for the ingenious gifting of death. He had had a bomb accepted by the government; he was now at work on another. The nature of them, of course, was severely censored; but they had given notoriety to his reputation as the parent of masked deaths, and it was patent that some foreign hand had been tinkering in the workshop. For Deegan Sharp to verify the missing apparati was the second hunch of Burch Burke.

Deegan Sharp admitted the reporter and himself, and proceeded up the stairs. In the middle of the flight the reporter paused.

"What's the idea, Sharp," he asked, "keeping a three-story white elephant like this just by your lone?"

"Mostly sentiment," returned the criminologist with a quizzical smile that showed he knew the whyfore of the inquisition; "it was my father's before me. I am known here. I can be quiet and undisturbed, and I can experiment. Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, I can't get rid of the place for anything like a fair figure, and I don't know why I should pay rent for a studio and a shop when I can have both for nothing."

"Right," said Burch Burke; "I am answered."

"I suppose your next in line," smiled Deegan Sharp, as they proceeded up the second ight, "will be to ask what hidden presence scrubs and otherwise keeps me in order?"

"Something on that order," admitted the reporter, "since I have sort of constituted myself a sleuth in this matter instead of a suave onlooker, reporting much that I see and more that I do not see for my sheet. Who does?"

Said Deegan Sharp:

"I have an ancient crone, like the house, my father's choice before me, who comes in and keeps me, domicile and garments in a spotless condition. My meals I acquire outside. I do not employ a resident slave for the reason that I'd rather not leave any one alone in the place, particularly with cooking. There are various explosives necessary—machines——"

They entered the shop, and as they did so Burch Burke opened wide his sleepy eyes and flashed a look at Deegan Sharp.

"Then how," he demanded, "were parts of your apparati stolen?"

Deegan Sharp flashed a confirmatory look about his shop before he replied; then, to the reporter's still keen glance, he paled perceptibly. For the first time his perfect aplomb deserted him. He looked shaken, and his cool, slatey eyes showed pupil dilation.

"I don't know," he said. And the measured tones of his voice were shaken.

"But you do know that they are gone?"

Deegan Sharp sparred for time. He cursed himself for a fool. He realized that he had given away that which, had he been astute enough, he could have denied. He had wanted to deny it; but the confirmation of the reporter's words had shaken him—shaken him horribly. For the first time in his conscious life Fear attacked him, wound her slimy fingers about his neck and strangled him.

"There are some trifling parts of my machinery gone," he managed to say after an interval.

"But you realize, Sharp, that you must account for the missing parts? Realize that the fact that they are missing is the most constructive evidence yet found as to the death? Coupled with the finding of your letter, it is pretty damning."

"I know."

"Another thing, Sharp, I hate to talk like this to you. In my heart, generally ready to believe the worst of every one, I can't believe you did it; but the fact is, my sheet is clamoring for a story. The pub is getting weary of stalls. Some of the facts in my possession would be leads for *The Earth*. I've never canned my paper. I don't want to now. First, last and all the time, I'm a reporter. It seems to me that it's up to you to make good on the missing machinery."

Deegan Sharp cleared his throat. He had regained his momentarily shaken composure, not to lose it again.

"Burke," he said, "it looks black. I know you've a right to give this to your paper—every right. Only, I believe that if you wait a day or so longer you're going to have a story for your sheet that will far eclipse this vague bit of information. Startling and rather damaging, I admit; but still not conclusive. I've a hunch this time. And when the murder does out, as murders always do, you'll have the lead. If this murder doesn't out, there'll be a story, anyhow, and an epitaph.

"Now, let's separate and meet again to-night. We may have something more to go on."

CHAPTER ELEVEN

WOMEN

BURCH BURKE went back to his office and strolled over to the M. E.

"Boss," he said, "think I've a story coming that'll make *The Earth* turn a handspring."

"You've done that before," admitted the boss; "but you seem to be riding a freight this trip. What's wrong?"

"A devil of a lot," replied the youth; "more than one suspects, I fancy. Fact is, boss, I can give *The Earth* a few little sensations right here now. I'm not asleep in the ditch or awake at the switch or whatever it is; but, well, which had you rather—one or two little thrills now, or the whole smashing thing in a day or so?"

The M. E. considered. He had faith in Burch Burke. He had every reason to have. More than once *The Earth* had turned the other sheets every variety of green from envy, thanks to the perspicacity of this indolent young person, whose capacity for news, whose amazing scoops had become history. He had never thrown the paper. Doubtless he never would. In his heart the M. E. knew that.

He remembered the day he had engaged Burch Burke.

He recalled the impression he had first held—of a limp and dreary boy hanging over his desk requesting a job, with the added information that he "could write; he didn't know why he thought so, but he just did."

The M. E. had called him names, and then, because the star reporter at that particular time had a wife who was having a perpetually recurrent infant, he had given him an assignment. He had given it with a groan for the prestige of *The Earth*, and he had been left with a peculiar sensation. For, just as he was about to dismiss the inadequate-looking searcher after a job, the youth's sleepy eyes had opened for a lightning second, and there had flashed upon him a ray from eyes that held, for surely, all the wisdom, all the daring, all the cunning in the reportorial world. For that unaccountable reason the M. E. had settled back in his chair and had ceased to worry. He had never ceased to worry before. It was an odd sensation. That night *The Earth* ran into its sixth edition. The sleepy youth had given it a scoop. He was speedily given a job, as speedily promoted, and to-day *The Earth* lived and had most of its being on the products of his brain and pen.

For these reasons, even though the public was whetting its tongue for the damning truth, even though the other sheets were leading and filling up columns with dry-as-dust information and hinting at "an immediate and sensational arrest," even so, the M. E. waved his stubby hand.

"Handle it to suit yourself, son," he finally admonished; "only, don't forget—*The Earth* first, last and all the time."

Burch Burke smiled a bit curiously.

"You don't need to remind me of that," he said.

"No, I don't believe I do."

The M. E. settled back in his chair. He always settled back in it when Burch Burke was on a job. When Burch was away on one of his infrequent vacations, the tales the sub-editors had to tell of the M. E. were vicious and bloodthirsty. His irritability rose up like a flood.

Burch Burke strolled out of the office, exchanging lackadaisical greetings with his fellow reporters as he went.

At the door he turned back again and went into the picture-lined den of the society editor.

That worthy looked the part. He was tonsorially perfect, and he had the expression of one who is continuously and flaccidly smiling into some vacuous countenance. His eyes were inexpressibly weary.

"What can I do for you, Fortunatus?" he asked acidly, as Burch leaned over his desk. "And why do you always make of my desk a chaise-longue?"

"Don't be a fool, Daisy," replied Burch, who knew that the society editor liked him, despite his ennuied sarcasm. "Don't be a fool, and keep these queries of mine under your silk kelly, even as in the past. I have kept scarlet reminiscences of yours under mine. They are innocent enough. Does Miss Anthony go much into society? Does Roscoe Creighton, and does Deegan Sharp?"

Daisy eyed him shrewdly.

"Of course," he said silkily; "all these childish interests in 'Who's Who and Why' are merely blinds. Equally, of course, I shall appease them, for, if I don't, you will stroll out of my sanctum and then stroll in again with orders from the M. E. that I shall."

Burch Burke smiled.

"Precisely," he agreed; "exactly, Doc Watson. You can be valuable to me. Now, shoot."

The society editor had been consulting some files.

"Miss Anthony never made her début," he announced; "but she has gone about a bit—a luncheon here, a box party there, an occasional *thé dansant*, a few dinners. Mr. Creighton does not accompany her. I have no record of Mr. Sharp at all."

"Thanks."

Burch Burke extracted a cigar from the coat-pocket of the society editor, strolled out through the rooms again, and thence into the hard, bright sunshine.

Once in the street, he accellerated his speed and made for the National Banking Trust. Within the vault-like precincts, he walked with brisk step to the cage containing the person of one Dick Tavish. He had known Dick in their sophomore year at Yale. At the end of the year Burch had dropped out, and from that time on he had lost track of Dick, save to have heard inadvertently through another Yale man that he was assistant paying-teller at the National.

He had never cared much for Dick; but he felt that he could now stimulate quite an evidence of interest.

Dick Tavish remembered him at once.

"I thought maybe you'd lunch with me," said Burch.

"I'd like to. Fine! I'll be through in twenty minutes. Can you wait?"

"Time means nothing to me. I'll wait right here."

Both young men nodded, and Burch dropped into a chair by the high desk where checks were made out, endorsed, etc. An aged woman was endorsing one now laboriously. Her face had a puckered, anxious expression. Evidently she did not endorse checks often; evidently they were still occasions to her. At her right a Greek was scrawling his signature in a sort of an angry impatience at the detail; at his right a pretty girl awaited her turn. She made Burch Burke think of a Pearl Anthony. He found himself wishing that he had a chance with a girl like that. She was so pretty, so fragile, so fine.

In a short twenty minutes Dick Tavish jauntily appeared. He was perfectly, very advancedly, gotten up. As they walked down Broad street to find a café, which Dick recommended as "swell," Burch noted under his betraying eyelids that Dick "took in" everything feminine they encountered. He had always been like that. There had been episodes at college——

He and Dick had never hit it off.

Dick selected a café with many dusty palms in the window, shaded lights, some discordant musicians, and popularly full of women with wandering gazes.

They ordered; and Burch insisted upon a cocktail apiece.

"You've changed, haven't you?" asked Dick.

"Just ripened with age," laughed Burch.

"Alcohol used to be a vice, with a capital V, in the college days?" Dick reminded questioningly.

"One cocktail as an appetizer isn't alcohol to me," replied Burch; "but it's a damn good tongue loosener," he added under his breath.

"I don't generally indulge during working hours," remonstrated Dick; "it's nix at the bank. But I suppose a good stiff peppermint lozenge will fix that."

"Oh, sure," reassured Burch; it's nix on *The Earth*, too. But every one will be gone by the time we return to our prospective bread-lines."

During the course of the luncheon the two men talked about their work, about the shows they had seen, about girls and sports and the war. Then Burch asked irrelevantly:

"Is everything all right at the bank with Roscoe Creighton's work?"

"Far as I know," replied Dick. "Why? Not quizzing me on his uncle's murder, are you?"

"No. Why you?" laughed Burch lightly. "I was just wondering, though. Always had an enormous bump of curiosity, you know, and of course if anything was wrong it might help. It wouldn't exactly go against you, Tavish, if you happened to have any 'info' to pass on."

"Sorry," replied Dick Tavish, "but I haven't."

"Sorry? Why sorry?"

"Because I'm not keen for Creighton. In banking hours he's straight enough, I guess. Why shouldn't he be? The old man gave him the long green like so much old newspaper. And couldn't he burn it up, though! Oh, boy!"

"But why sore at him?"

"Well, I'll tell you. There was a little girl down at the Cœur de Lion Café that I had taken a shine to—about the strongest shine I've ever taken to any one skirt. Just for the nasty spite of it, Ros cut in with his dough, and at the same time cut me out. He's the little sugar baby where the girls are concerned. He——"

But Burch Burke interrupted casually.

"Let's talk war," he said. "I'm not strong for Ros and

his amours, except"—he leaned toward the other and smiled a most artificial smile—"I'd sort of like to cut in on a date," he confided oilily. "I don't know any girls in this burg—at least, not any girls a fellow can have any sport with. I'd like to; put me wise to where he—where he dates up, can't you?"

Dick Tavish gave his companion an amazed stare.

"My Lord, but you have changed!" he exploded. "Age isn't doing a thing to you. You'll be a reg'lar Jack-the-Ripper by the time you're forty, and you're not bad-looking, either. I'd like to see you cut Ros out with some queen. He's done enough of that on his own hook with me and some others. If there's anything that can cut coin and baby-boy looks out, it's the gift o' gab, and you've got that, Burke, or I'm a dead man."

"Thanks! Well, now, where'd I be apt to run into him?"

"Why, at this same Cœur de Lion Café. It's sort of obscure; but Ros seems to like them that way. You'd think with all his kale he'd hit the high spots—White Lights—but, no; Ros is like a mole. He takes his joy parties in dark little holes, like the Cœur de Lion Café. You're apt to find him there most every night; or no, not every night, but three or four out of the seven, anyway."

"Thanks!" laughed Burch Burke nonchalantly. "I'd like to have some fun of the kind. I'll look him up."

He called for the check. He had had enough of Dick Tavish.

As they parted, Tavish bent near him anxiously.

"Don't put Ros wise to my giving him away, will you?" he asked. "He'd do me dirty, if he knew."

"No," assured Burch. "I'll keep mum. S' long."

"S' long, Burke, look me up again."

As Burch Burke wended his leisurely way to the nearest phone-booth, his lazy eyes were wide awake.

"Women, huh!" he meditated. "Women!"

In a cigar-store he dropped his nickel in the booth, hesitated an instant, then hung up the receiver without getting his call. He bought a package of expensive cigarettes, then sauntered out.

On the next corner was a drug emporium. He strolled into this and slipped unobtrusively into a phone-booth There he gave and received Deegan Sharp's number.

"Sharp," he said rapidly over the phone, "meet me at ten to-night at the Cœur de Lion. Find it. Only one place by that name. Dope. 'By."

Then he hung up the receiver and had a soda. As he drank, his young mouth—young for all it said—twisted cynically.

"Women," he muttered again. "Women! H'm!"

CHAPTER TWELVE

AT THE CŒUR DE LION

BEFORE he returned to his humble boarding establishment, where he was an object of maternal solicitude and maternal pride to his well-imbursed landlady, Burch dropped in to see Inspector Welmore.

He found that official looking harried; his "Chance" had much of her shining gold rubbed off. She was looking rather forlorn. He thought that he had better await a more definite chance. A murder with no clue other than a dent where the victim had fallen—what kind of a way is that to commit a murder? Inspector Welmore had been thinking of spiritualism of late.

"What you been doing?" queried Burch Burke as he offered the inspector a cigarette and dropped in a chair opposite.

"The deuce of a lot," grunted the inspector. He felt very old and disgruntled this morning; he felt very inadequate and out of it. After all, success is reluctant when one has passed the high meridian of life. One has to have worn the laurel wreath upon a jauntier brow.

"Did you," asked the reporter, "interview the ruling spirit at the National?"

"D'ye think I'm a suckling?" growled the inspector. "I may not be Old King Brady, the crafty hero, but I'm no suckling!"

Burch Burke was imperturbable. He looked vaguely affronted.

"I only took an interest," he said injuredly. "What did you learn?"

"Not a thing. The kid's all right. Been there two years and more, and no trouble. They haven't had their books audited yet; but so far so good."

"Right. What else have you done?"

"Is this a swop," parried the inspector, or what?"

"Mebbe; mebbe not."

"Well," sighed the inspector, "outside of having Deegan Sharp trailed by one of our best men, which extra work is due to you—and no thanks to you—we have merely located the two young women correspondents of Miss Anthony's, and——"

"And?"

"And found them harmless, saccharine young things, with no idea that murder is anywhere save among the Thou Shalt Nots. In fact, they were only dimly aware that Professor Creighton was dead. Their newspaper reading is parentally censored, and does not include murder."

"Ah, quite so; dear things!"

The inspector growled. Obviously his humor was very bad.

Burch arose to take his departure.

"Then it's not a swop?" again growled the inspector.

"Not this time," said Burch Burke blithely. "Ta, ta!"

The inspector replied with an unreprintable volley.

From the office of the inspector the reporter wended his way to his boarding-house, after phoning his sheet that there was nothing doing yet; and he laid tremendous stress on the yet.

"Cut a letter out of the 'yet,'" growled back the M. E. "The other sheets are beating us to it. At least, they are doling it out piecemeal to stay the public appetite."

"The dear public," drawled back Burch Burke, "is going to have such an attack of acute indigestion ere long that it will never recover. *The Earth* is going to give it to it. Bide your time, boss," and then he hung up.

Once at home, he sent his niftiest suit around the corner to the tailor to be pressed, sent his neatest shoes out to be polished, and commissioned the pretty art student in the house, who was soft on him, to sally forth and buy him a tie.

"One that'll catch the eye," he admonished.

Apprehensive lest the tie was predestined to catch the eye of some alien maiden, the art student viciously bought the ugliest one she could unearth, and took a mean pleasure in so doing. But Burch thought it was a dream, and told her so, and she reconciled herself with the reflection that he and she were certainly not kindred in their tastes. But when a maid is "soft" on a man, that seems to be a lean bone to pick for comforting.

After these details had been attended to, Burch ordered no one to disturb him, on penalty of a hideous death, ordered his supper to be served at seven, himself to be called at six, and forthwith went to sleep.

Deegan Sharp spent the morning tinkering about his shop, with an abstracted expression. Had a psychologist been there he would have known that battles were being fought on that face—battles that were not altogether of the spirit, but an indissoluble compound of both.

About four, with his shadow behind him, he called upon Pearl Anthony. He was there a great while. When he came out he had a shining light in his slatey eyes, and his shoulders were more erect than ever they had been before. He had the appearance of one from whose shoulders has been removed a great burden, and at the same time weighted with a great responsibility.

Then he, too, went home to rest.

At ten that night Deegan and Burch Burke were seated at a table in one corner of the Cœur de Lion. It was in a corner, but it was also a good vantage-point, for Burch had a full command of the door, and Deegan was facing

the cleared space where the cabaret performers, and later the diners, were to fox-trot, twist, undulate and gallop. To the right of the floor space was a jazz band. For the rest of the place, it was typical of hundreds like it. One got the impression that the lighting was dull red, the tables numerous, close and well-filled, the waiters greasy, the wine plentiful. Most of the men were young, with bad complexions, sensual eyes and loose mouths. It was astonishing how true to type they ran. There were two very old men there. They were merely horridly aged editions of the young ones, and the girls they had with them were the youngest girls in the café.

The girls also ran to a type — much rouge, more powder, very low blouses, cheap furs, impossible footgear and shrill voices. Every one seemed to be desperately having a desperately good time. A writer would have said "hectic."

"Why are we here?" asked Deegan Sharp, when he and Burch were seated, and Burch had ordered oysters.

"Another, ah, hunch," said Burch Burke.

"Woman?"

"And——" observed Burch cryptically.

"Am I not to be enlightened?"

"Do you mind waiting, old man? I—well, I just have the fancy that I want the thing to happen itself under your own eyes, without my preparing you."

"You don't need to prepare me," said Deegan Sharp quietly; "I know."

This time Burke opened his mouth.

"You know?" he asked. "That can't be. What do you know?"

"I know that we are waiting here for Roscoe Creighton," said Deegan Sharp.

"How long have you known that?"

"I've always known it."

"Always?"

"Almost from the beginning of the time I knew the Creightons."

"Do you mind telling me just what you do know?" Burch Burke's voice was tinged with a new respect. He always felt a respect for a person who had unearthed something he could not.

"I don't mind in the least," said Deegan Sharp; "only, my young friend, I, like yourself, am not ready to speak freely and entirely just now. But don't worry; what I do know will go to you and *The Earth*, via you first. This much is all I know now—that Roscoe will be here, and has been here time on end, and that—well, women——"

From the copper placque on the right wall could be seen the outlines of a skull face.

They had finished almost their entire meal, when Roscoe came in with a brunette girl, flashily dressed, but rather beautiful despite the grotesque attire that tried to belie it. They slouched over to a side table and slouched down at it. The girl faced Deegan Sharp, and Roscoe faced Burch Burke. They were evidently, but not pleasurably, engrossed in one another.

The girl seemed to be doing most of the talking; her expressions were scornful, contemptuous, pleading and weary. She flashed a set of exceedingly white teeth as she talked, and her eyes were like black diamonds. Her hands were beringed, and she wore an expensive wrist-watch.

Roscoe seemed sullen, also contemptuous.

Midway, over coffee, Burke leaned to Sharp.

"We've got to talk to that girl," he said, "to-night."

"Of course," Deegan said, "if they leave here to-night."

"They will," nodded Burch Burke; "there's a break-up pending over there — thunder and lightning brewing—and this is a last and very pyrotechnical farewell, or I roll off *The Earth*. The bird is going to fly the coop, and we after her."

"They are tanking up," said Deegan.

"That'll make her talkative," Burch rejoiced.

Then there followed an amazing interval. Burch began to wink at, ogle and otherwise disport himself for the edification of an exceedingly blonde maiden, who sat alone at a table on the other side of the room. She had bowed to Roscoe as he came in. Finally Burch arose and approached her with a mincing grace.

"Won't you join us?" he asked. "We're awfully lonely."

The girl laughed.

"You are a scream!" she said, as she arose and went over to their table. "I don't believe you ever picked up a girl in your young life before. Now, did you?"

"I never saw one that I wanted to," said Burch with a sickening glance; inwardly he was quivering like a leaf. "This is worse than the trenches—the gas, the Huns, the—the—anything," he groaned inwardly. "But keep up your nerve, m' boy, keep up your nerve. She's only a female, that's all—only a female. G-r-r-r!"

The girl was laughing again.

"Aw, quit yer kiddin'," she said coyly. "You're a nifty looker and dresser all right, all right. Ever been here before? Why don't you interduce your swell friend?"

"No, not here—ah—Mr. Blunt!" said Burch Burke, and his face reddened like the cheap "red ink" he was toying with.

"Oh, how d'ye do, Mr. Blunt? Charmed, I'm shure!"

The exceeding blonde smiled broadly on Deegan Sharp, showing all her own teeth and one that was not hers—gold. Inwardly she was thinking, "The kid's cutie—cutie pie; but this guy is the real guy. Gawd, I bet he could kiss some!"

The gentleman ordered wine for the lady, and lobster, for which she delicately expressed a preference.

"Seems like my stummick is so delicate, lobster's all I can manage," she said plaintively.

Deegan Sharp said it was a shame.

"If that's all you can eat," he said, "you must want plenty of it." He forthwith ordered some more. The exceeding blonde had not had enough lobster in many moons—and hair-dyes had gone up fearful. She felt a positive fervor of gratitude for Deegan Sharp.

"Do you know that gentleman with the lady in black and scarlet?" he asked.

The blonde looked up from her second broiled live.

"Sure," she said; "that's the gilded mole, and with him is Cassie Prout, the nasty cat!"

"Is there trouble?" asked Deegan Sharp.

He had the most intriguing voice when he wanted to have. It could be as soft, as insinuating, as velvet. It could make one feel that to answer it in the affirmative was a matter of life or death. The blonde looked plaintive again. She toyed with the last pathetic lobster claw.

"I don't like to air my troubles," she said. "Most likely you wouldn't call it that, but——"

"But?" prompted Sharp more softly still—oh, so softly—lest the wary cat that sleeps in the female breast should waken and cry "Caution!"

"Oh, well," said the blonde, "it's like this. Some girls ain't never satisfied. Cassie Prout's one of them. Soon's another girl gets a feller she's on the trail. Never trust a brune, take it from me. They'll do you dirt every time. They ain't—aren't no more to be trusted than a travelin' salesman, and Gawd knows, and me, too, to my everlastin' detriment, they ain't—aren't. Well, all there is to it, the gilded mole was shinin' up to me, and it looked pretty soft to little blondy. No one the mole takes a fancy to has to do more for a bit than cook him rarebit and shake up cocktails in a cozy rent-all-paid. I'd been working—stenog is my line—and, as I say, it looked rosy. Along comes the brune—the cat, how I hate her!—and just about kidnaped the mole. But you wait; I'll get even with her yet. The mole is about to hand her the merry can-can, and then she'll be hunting new game. That's where I'll come in; she won't bag it, not if I know it first."

"Does Cassie live near here?" asked Deegan Sharp casually. "I mean, does—er—the mole—ah—stake her?"

"Cute little dump, all right," said the blonde. "Yes, right around the corner. I don't know what Cassie 'll do. She ain't so pop'lar as she was. Nothin' under her hat—that's her trouble. The mole hasn't much under his; but he has a roll from here to San Fran. Some man's a fool to fill that young jackanape's pockets, and what he—— Oh, are you leavin'?"

"We must," Burch Burke stood up hastily. "I'm—ah—a medical man, and I just remembered an operation at midnight. We'll be down again; see you some more."

Sharp smiled at her and gave her a ten-dollar bill.

"Pay the check with this," he said kindly, and passed out.

When he had gone, something like two tears wet the belladonnaed brilliance of the exceeding blonde's eyes.

"I ain't been talked to like that since Lincoln did the barn-dance," she thought, "nor looked at, either—sorter sorry-like and kind. Gosh!"

Then she applied the tiniest tip of her heavily scented kerchief to her eyes, and her gaze began to rove toward the other men present.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

JUST AROUND THE CORNER

OUTSIDE the door of the Cœur de Lion, Roscoe and Cassie parted, and Cassie literally ran around the corner, with Deegan Sharp and Burch Burke in swift-stepped pursuit.

Five minutes later they were knocking at her door.

She admitted them herself without much question. She had removed her hat, and with her disheveled dark hair looked much younger than in the café. But there were hard lines about her mouth, dark rims under her dark eyes, and a sort of a film, like a gray dusting of powder, over her face.

She was in the semi-hysterical state, helped out by wine that makes for volubility.

Deegan Sharp had told her as she ushered them into a cozy, lamplit living-room, that they were friends of the Creighton family, and also working under orders from the police. He told her further that a frank statement of all she knew about Roscoe Creighton would greatly help her, should any need for questioning his personal life arise.

She had her share of hard sense. She admitted their argument.

"I don't suppose I know a lot more than a dozen or so others in this town," she began, with the strain of hysteria still in her voice. "I guess there's plenty that could tell the same almighty story, and there is some that could tell worse, if they could tell at all.

"An hour back I wouldn't have opened my face about the mole, if I was to have swung for it. An hour can make some difference. Now, well, now what do I care what I tell? I'd rather tell on him, rather railroad him, if I could, than let some other girl get him, and some one surely will—one always does.

"I suppose I care about the mole, or did. I don't know. Maybe it was only his roll. I don't know about that, either. They say you always love a man who's sent you to hell and back. I been there, and back, and then there again, for the mole. Suppose he cares? Not he. There isn't nothing that marks the mole—not a woman, not drink, not the stuff—nothing. He still smiles his baby smile—skin like a new-born child, hair so downy and soft. Oh, he's the wolf in sheep's clothing, all right—the mole. He's had places like this for a dozen girls—some of 'em not girls, either, but wimmin—since I first heard of him. Before this I was—well, half-way straight. Don't mind what that blonde thing told you. She hates me like a stray bulldog. She's poison, anyway. How I hate her!

"Well, but when the mole comes along and sings his baby-talk into my ear, tells me I'm the first, tells me the love gag and the lonesome gag and the suicide gag and all the rest of the old relics, I'm blamed if I don't swallow 'em, and enjoy the swallowin'. As I say, I guess I cared about him. He sure got me with those baby eyes, hands like a woman's, pouty mouth. Well, we fixed this place up; he did. Spent money on it like water, spent money on me like water. Then there was trouble. I wanted him to marry me. He laughed at me. After that he began to get tired of me; I knew the signs. There wasn't any use. I tried, I tried, I threatened him, I teased him, I tried to make him jealous, I was tender as a dove, fierce as a she-tiger. Wasn't any use."

Deegan Sharp intervened.

"Pardon me," he said; "but what had you to threaten? Yourself, of course; but you would hardly do that."

"No; it wasn't me. One of 'em died in the Foundling Hospital. Some old hag cared for her."

"Good God!" whispered Burch Burke under his breath.

Deegan Sharp was paler than death.

"Well," resumed the girl, "a week or so ago I find that the mole is going to get married. That's why he's skinnin' away from me. Not that that will last. Oh, the mole is a hummer, all right, all right. It was just his roll, I reckon. Don't suppose I cared a tinker's damn for him; but it will be lonesome!"

Deegan Sharp was patting her on the arm.

"We have taken down your evidence," he said; "it is a bitter tale. But I think you are well rid of the mole, caring or no caring. You are capable of better things than moles. We must find some of those better things after this affair is over. It is going to be over very soon."

The girl unearthed a card for them, and they took their silent departure.

Once in the street, the two men walked rapidly away from whence they had come.

"Phew!" whistled Burch Burke. "Sometimes I think I'll take a freighter and make for the Southern Pacific and never be seen again. I'd like to go where there are blue skies and blue waters, and none of this stench and filth."

"There is," observed Deegan Sharp, "bad blood in most of the blue-blooded families."

"Then," said Burch Burke, "you think that the kid did it?"

"I'd rather not say yet," said Deegan. "You'll know to-morrow. In the meantime, keep all of this mum. You'll have a scoop for your paper like it's never had before. But tell me, what's your own theory?"

Burch Burke whistled.

"My theory is the kid, right enough," he said; "rotten as he is, murder is not above him. There's two things in the case I can't reconcile. The first is his innocent baby face, and the second is the lack of brains underneath the face. Sharp, a man with brains committed that murder."

"Poor Cassie Prout explained away your first remark," said Deegan, "when she said herself that neither women, wine nor dope injured the outer semblance of the man. He is one of the rare specimens, no doubt, unmarked by the smudgy fingers of crime and bad living. As for your second observation——"

"Yes."

"I am not at present prepared to state," smiled Deegan Sharp.

"But you are practically assuming that Creighton is the murderer?"

"I am assuming nothing. I don't know yet; but when one is theorizing one has to make presumably direct assumptions."

"To-night's evidence was damning."

"It was more or less circumstantial. It consumed money——"

"But the old man gave him so much."

"True; but women suck money in like a baby sucks in milk. Their gewgaws are worth their weight in gold. There isn't the money minted that could appease a woman armored with youth, and a few scruples."

"You think he might have reasoned he'd have more when the old man croaked?"

"Professor Creighton gave him a munificent allowance; but it was not in the six figures, nor near it. Upon his death, should the money go to Roscoe, he would have it in the six figures easily."

"H'm!"

"In the meantime," broke off Deegan Sharp abruptly, "I should like to do some supposings to-morrow night with you and Inspector Welmore and possibly Doctor Dunbar. For on the day after to-morrow I have summoned all those directly and indirectly concerned to meet me in the antique room at the Creighton home, and there is going to be an end to supposition. That I promise you."

"Ah-h!"

"In the meantime get hold of the inspector, and come to my house to-morrow night—yes?"

"Sure," agreeably assented the reporter, who was already in his mind glutting the public with the fatness of his lead.

"Until to-morrow night," said Deegan Sharp.

"Ditto," said Burch Burke.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

SUPPOSITIONS

INSPECTOR WELMORE, looking hopeful, and Burch Burke, looking anticipatory, arrived at the home of Deegan Sharp almost before their host had returned from his evening meal. Doctor Dunbar arrived immediately afterward.

He took them at once into a conventional little smoking-room, supplied them with tobacco, according to their tastes, and then seated himself in a low chair before the lighted grate, stretching his long, finely modeled limbs of a greyhound before him with an easy grace.

"This is sort of a before-the-climax *entre-acte*," he said, smiling slightly, "because, gentlemen, I know that the climax itself is scheduled and will fall due on the morrow. But before it comes, I want to exhaust every—well, I want to do some suppositioning. I want to remove every ghost of a chance of an error; I want corroboration.

"Doctor, you are satisfied, absolutely and conclusively, that there was no faintest possibility of an ingenious poisoning?"

The physician nodded affirmatively, decisively.

"The stomach and intestines of man are not subtle in concealment," he said. "There is no poison so subtle, no method of giving it so ingenious that traces of it would not be found. We gave the most rigid tests. We are perfectly convinced."

"I see. Well, it seems to me that there is only the depression to the right of the temple to go by, then?"

Deegan Sharp made of his remark an interrogation.

"I do not see much to go by in that," exclaimed Burch Burke. "A blow like that never killed a man like the professor, did it, doctor?"

"Not if it was a blow," said the doctor thoughtfully.

Deegan Sharp fixed the physician with his slatey eyes.

"Then you have doubts that it was a blow?" he asked.

"Death had to come some way, Mr. Creighton," replied the doctor. "It is natural to go upon the only evidence afforded by the body, no matter how weak and ineffectual."

"Yes, of course," Deegan considered. "Inspector," he said finally, "do you believe the depression on the temple could have caused death?"

"I do not see how it could," said the inspector. "It is not near enough the temple—not by an inch. It might have stunned; but killed, no."

"Then," said Deegan Sharp, "there seems to be a supernatural agency at work, doesn't there?"

"I'm no believer in spooks, Mr. Sharp," said Doctor Dunbar; "but I declare if this thing isn't cleared up soon I shall renounce *materia medica*."

"I'll quit exposing the séance sisters," declared Burch Burke, "and give 'em the laugh on us."

"Of course, Mr. Sharp," said the inspector, wrapping a few last shreds of dignity about him like a forlorn mantle, "you must know that if a solution is not arrived at by to-morrow night you will have to resubmit yourself. After all, your letter is incriminating, and then you are known as the inventor of some intricate machinery. Our men went through your laboratory in the performance of their duties, but could make nothing of the apparati. Experts were to be called in when you made your request to solve this thing yourself. The commissioner advised it, but patience, my dear sir, is not elastic."

Deegan Sharp smiled at the pompous and thwarted inspector.

"I know," he said kindly, "and patience has only until to-morrow to go. I asked you here to-night to give you an opportunity to present any theories you might have evolved before I present my solution. There seem to be no theories?"

"I wouldn't say that, Mr. Sharp," said the inspector; "the force has been working very hard. We have run the most obscure clues to the ground. We are now awaiting your pronouncement before proceeding. Person-

ally, I see a woman's hand in this. There is too much brute in man, unless"—here the inspector paused, and added with a faint malice—"that man have the intricacy of a woman and her delicacy even in crime."

"Spooks," observed Burch Burke again.

A silence followed, filled chiefly by the smoke that arose in thick, agitated gusts from the inspector's cigar, slender spirals from Deegan's cigarette, and a steady stream from Burch Burke's indescribable pipe.

All three felt almost literally as though they were plunked up against an impassable brick wall. There seemed to be no demolishing the wall, no scaling of its gigantic height. They had come up against the unsolvable.

The reporter, with all that he had seen and heard, felt still at a loss. How? That was the question—how?

There were two or more persons on whom the crime might, not irrationally, be attached. Two or more against whom the long finger of circumstantial evidence was pointing. But what avail was that? How had the one or more persons done it? How could any one kill a man in his own home, safe in his own study, in a house inhabited by others, noiselessly, obscurely, tracelessly?

If that still form lying so still in the morning light of the antique room had been able to speak, what tale would he have told?

How often we batten our finite senses against the portals of death asking wherefore, why, why? And how only too often the answer is a broken heart and a mind distraught.

Something of these thoughts were passing through the minds of three at least of the four men. Deegan Sharp alone sat with a slight smile playing about his mouth; but in his eyes there was a brooding sadness.

Finally he spoke.

"Well, gentlemen," he said, "to-morrow is going to be a strenuous, but not an unfruitful day. I have my solution to offer, and a painful ordeal ahead of me. Not to play the impolite host, I propose that we adjourn."

The four men shook hands and parted.

"To-morrow," they said as they left.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

SOLUTION

IT was white, blinding noon the next day when all those "directly and indirectly" concerned gathered together in the antique room. The bronzes caught the sun and gave it back again with a rich, somber, golden glow—a brown giving forth, as though reluctantly, the spirit of its gold. The coppers, fiery and more generous, hurt the eye with their still-polished brilliance, and on the carefully arranged shelves the jades lay sleeping like sick memories.

Deegan Sharp stood behind a small teakwood table in the large bay-window, hung in jade velours. He faced his audience, for whom Matty had provided chairs.

There were present beside himself Roscoe, Pearl, Dorky and Matty, the two sergeants—O'Donnell and Flaherty—Inspector Welmore, the assistant district attorney, the coroner and the coroner's physician, Dick Tavish, rather bewildered; the president of the National Banking Trust, the exceeding blonde, staring pensively at Deegan Sharp, and Cassie Prout glaring balefully at Roscoe. On all faces there was that look of imminence present when mortals face a cataclysmic moment.

Deegan Sharp was speaking. His lips looked thin and compressed, there were tiny lights like fine silver in his slatey eyes, and his voice cut incisively like the finest edge of steel.

"I am going to be brief," he said, "because I am not only inflicting a painful thing, but I am performing one.

"First of all, I have the technical explanation to make of a machine, or device of my own invention. I have named it the Ray Gun. In a sense, it was still incomplete, never having been thoroughly tested out, save in theory by myself. In theory it tested perfectly; in practise"—he paused for the merest fraction of a second—"it has tested equally well.

"To be explicit, the Ray Gun, so called, is a machine capable of emitting, or releasing, a tremendous force of energy composed of electricity in a form known as the Violet Ray, and which can be directed to any given point and made to travel the distance of one thousand feet.

"In other words, the ether waves of the atmosphere act as a conductor similar to the principles of wireless telegraphy or telephony, except that in the case of the Ray Gun these same ether waves act as tracks for the solid body of the electric current of deadly voltage or spark, which is emitted by the machine.

"This energy is stored and generated in the gun by a complex series of storage batteries of great capacity, although of infinitesimal dimensions. It is brought to the point of release in the gun similar to the loading of a rifle, with the ordinary ball and powder cartridge, and at the desired time this force is released by the simple operation of a lever or trigger, which, by causing a short-circuit, automatically discharges the stored-up energy. This passes from the machine to the point of contact, to which it must be directed, and anything or anybody in the path of the deadly spark will be given death immediately in nine cases out of ten, without so much, or at best, a faint depression, so swift, so thorough, so delicate is its action—almost as delicate"—he glanced at the staring inspector—"as a woman could be. Am I understood?"

A murmur of assent filled the room.

"In this particular case," pursued Deegan Sharp, "some one made the professor a gift of the beautiful copper placque there on the wall to the right of the room. Will some one darken the room, please?"

Some one, probably Pearl, gave a suppressed little scream. Burch lowered the night-black shades and drew the velour curtains. Then some one screamed again faintly.

From the copper placque on the right wall could be seen the outlines of a skull face, out of which gleamed, the evil color of jade, two phosphorescent eyes.

"An odd thing," said Deegan Sharp, when the occupants of the room had stared long enough at the curio, suddenly gristly in their eyes. "Some one who loved the dead man very dearly must have given him this placque—copper, as you see, and with these startling eyes, the pale green of jade. A most fortunate combination."

"For the love of God!" burst from some dry throat; but in the darkness no one could tell the owner.

"In this particular case," said Deegan Sharp again, "the same kindly person has placed beneath the copper placque a double plate, and the weight of the professor's body caused a contact of the two plates, thereby creating a circuit to the machine by wires laid under the floor and acting in place of the lever, thereby releasing the circuit. Am I understood?"

A thick silence was the answer.

"Now," said Deegan Sharp, "that the machine is plain to you, I will proceed to construct the evening—and more than the evening—some months before the professor's death. Patently, some one had great need of money. By the way the strong and rather comprehensive manner the machine has been handled—I should say a man. What he needed so much money for at such a cost I can only hazard a guess. Possibly women; there is no luxury so absorbent—no one thing that will so certainly drive a man, notably a young man—to, well, ends.

"Therefore, in anticipation of possible extremities, on one of the professor's frequent excursions to museums and other places, this person laid beneath the floor of this room and the corresponding room of the empty house next-door the aforementioned wires. This same person—the only person, by the way, to whom I confided the secrets of my Ray Gun, the only person who has ever had access to my shop—then copied and had made a fac-

simile of my Ray Gun at great expense, which he could no doubt afford.

"When the time came, came also the kindly gift of the copper placque. The gift was made in the day-time—on the same day the Ray Gun was installed in the vacant house and the plates laid beneath the copper placque.

"On the evening of that day, when, after a late dinner, the professor came into his antique room, as was his invariable custom, he was naturally attracted at once to the strangely gleaming, hitherto unnoticed eyes of phosphorus. He stepped to the placque, all pleased surprise, to investigate; stepped on the double plate. The next morning he was found dead. No; just a moment and I am finished. I am going to forestall some questions. Immediately I found that various minor parts of my apparati had been stolen—parts, nevertheless, impossible of duplication. I knew the guilty party. More, from investigations of my own in various unsavory parts of town, in the interests of criminology, of which I am an abstract student, I had, all unseen, myself encountered the guilty party, following pursuits totally unsuspected by members of his family and most of his friends. I kept silence, when I might have spoken, because"—here he made quite a perceptible pause—"because I did not wish to incriminate so horribly a man I believed beloved by a woman I myself loved. I have discovered that in this instance I erred; therefore——"

Deegan Sharp got no further. Out in the pitchy black room, relieved only by the baleful phosphorous eyes, a rough, hysterical malignant voice shrilled discordantly.

"Stop describing me, you fiend!" it rasped. "I'm done for, I know it. I'm not the baby-faced fool you and the rest have been thinking me. I can play a game, and I can quit when the cards are down. I did it! I did it! I did it! There! I did it for money, too, just as you said—money for women and for what the worthy president of the Trust is about to tell you. The books were balanced yesterday, and they're short—thousands and thousands short!" He broke into a wild shriek of laughter horrible to hear. "Forestalling some of you, eh?" he asked. "Taking the words out of your mouths? Well, I'm glad it's over—glad I'm rid of the whole mess myself—the women with their white flesh and their sucking, draining souls, the smug bank—all of it, all of you! Glad, glad, glad!"

The inspector stepped forward, and silence fell on the room as the arrest was made. Then Deegan Sharp made his final remark.

"I know," he said, "that, with my knowledge of the machine, I laid myself open to the suspicion to the certainty; but I counted—I counted on the hysteria in the man with the crime."

After every one had gone, Deegan Sharp found Pearl in the small and sunny parlor. He took her in his arms, all the steel, the iron, the incisiveness gone from him.

"Pearl of pearls," he whispered, "for you and for me the open seas, the bluest skies and forgetfulness."

In the M. E.'s office Burch Burke was typing like a madman the story of Case 4,444.

TAKE NOTICE!

The feature stories already published in this magazine are well worth reading. If you have not already seen them. The list is as follows:

No.
1 THE EEL MAN, By Robert Carlton Brown
2 ZITANA OF MAISON ROUGE, By F. W. Doughty
3 THE MYSTERIOUS WEB, By Armstrong Perry
4 UNDER THE HYPNOTIC SPELL, By Dr. Harry Enton
5 THE SILKEN SHEATH, By Crittenden Marriott
6 A FORTUNE-TELLER'S SECRET, By Gladys Hall
7 THE MYSTIC EMBLEM, By Marie Coolidge Rask
8 THE CARDS OF FATE, By William Goode
9 MR. BACHELLER'S APARTMENTS, By William Hamilton Osborne
10 THE INNER WHEEL, By Octavius Roy Cohen
11 THE VOICE OF THE VALLEY, By Robert Carlton Brown
12 THE SIGN OF THE SEVEN SHARKS, By Charles F. Oursler
13 UNDER A MASK, By Crittenden Marriott

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MAKING THE WIND STORE ELECTRICITY

IT would be hard to trace a resemblance between the picturesque windmills of Holland and the wind-power electric plants to be seen here and there on farms throughout this country. Mounted in steel frames capable of withstanding even a hurricane, this type of air-motor supplies electricity for all farm needs, and there is no reason why they should not be built large enough to develop thousands of horse-power, thereby effecting a permanent saving in coal, says *Electrical Experimenter*. In fact, such a plant has been designed for the town of Tomah, Wis.

The working parts of these mills are enclosed in weatherproof casings, filled with lubricating oil and mounted on ball bearings. The power vanes turn on their bearings in such a manner as to expose them to the wind at the angle of greatest efficiency, no matter from what quarter it may blow. For only 30 degrees of the circle does the wind strike the vane on its edge or at a point where the fullest power is not developed.

The most ingenious features are the automatic controls. When the storage batteries are charged the mill stops; after they have given up a certain amount of current the vanes are thrown into the wind and begin work again. If the velocity of the air currents would develop a speed injurious to the machinery, the angle of the vanes to the wind automatically changes, preventing the mill from running above a given rate. The plant requires little attention. Reasonable care must be given to the generator, distilled or rain-water provided for the batteries, and once a year the bearings must be filled with oil.

THE MAGIC OF EVIL

By LAURANA W. SHELDON

THE burly proprietor of a flourishing "Tenderloin" saloon, passed to and fro before the table at which his last patron was seated, and even coughed loudly, in the hopes of attracting his attention. Finding that hints were useless in this case, he stopped and spoke apologetically to the stranger:

"Sorry to hurry a good customer, sir, very sorry, but it's nigh on two o'clock, and we're obliged to close at twelve sharp Saturday nights. It's the law in New York now."

He paused and waited fully a minute, but the stranger, if he heard, vouchsafed no answer.

The proprietor coughed again louder than ever, and mentally deciding that the gentleman was deaf, bent forward a little, tapping him on the shoulder.

In an instant his hand recoiled from the contact, while his hair fairly stood on end from the peculiar sensation that had spread over his body. It was as if he had touched a galvanic battery, whose every cell was in furious action.

After a little the stinging passed away, and with his hands held carefully behind him, the bewildered man stooped even lower and peered at his guest with what was beginning to be a feeling of terror.

He was only a slight, sinewy creature, with the swarthy skin and beady eyes so common to Oriental countries, but so deep was the trance into which he had fallen, and so alarming the unseen force with which he had apparently surrounded himself, that for, perhaps, the first time in the whole course of his disreputable career the keeper of various notorious "Dives" was filled with a sense of awe and timidity before one who was physically, at least, very much his inferior.

What should he do? Another glance at the clock showed him that he must hesitate no longer. The bartenders were gone, the waiters were gone, and he must empty the place if he wished to keep within the law and save the bother of being arrested.

He dared not close with the fellow inside; he had done that several times in his younger days, and once it had cost him thirty days on the "island." His guest had missed his watch and ring just after he was aroused and allowed to go in the early morning.

He dared not take that chance again, although the stranger wore a tempting chain and the pin in his scarf was a remarkably good one.

His host smiled grimly as he took a hasty inventory of these things, but he would as soon have tried to rob a red-hot stove as to touch again that living battery.

Keeping one eye on the silent form, he shuffled noiselessly across the floor and looked out in the street in search of assistance. He hardly knew whether to call an officer or send to the telegraph company and get a "lineman"; but while he stood with one hand on the door and the other upon his left hip-pocket, the stranger suddenly sprang to his feet and began jerking his body in the most extraordinary manner.

At that moment two policemen entered, or rather a "Roundsman" and an officer. The "Roundsman" was strong and vigorous, but the other, when the light in the saloon fell upon him, seemed strangely pale, and his eyes gleamed wildly.

"Give me a bit of whisky, Lannon," the stalwart Roundsman began imperiously, but in another instant his attention was attracted to the scene before him.

Like one in the throes of some mighty passion, the stranger was twisting and contorting his person, now flinging out his arms as if warding off some evil thing, and now snapping his fingers vigorously in the air, while his eyes seemed fixed in a sightless vision.

With a sudden accidental movement, the proprietor knocked a large glass pitcher from the bar and the crash it made seemed to calm the fellow. With one long shiver he sat down again. His arms hung limply by his sides, but the light of reason seemed restored once more to the glassy eyeballs.

Almost simultaneous with the change the ailing policeman suddenly revived, and a look of consciousness crept back to his ashen features.

He looked inquiringly into his companion's face, then, as the stranger walked swiftly by him on his way to the door, he shuddered as if from some inward horror and sat down upon the nearest chair.

"I found him at one o'clock in this curious fix," the Roundsman explained, as he received the whisky. "He was never off his beat before, so I'm sure that something uncommon has happened."

The sick man evidently understood, for he nodded his head in an affirmative manner.

"I was called by some fellow to a house," he began weakly, "where there was either a murder or some stealin' bein' done; I remember goin' in and goin' up the stairs, but after I had got to the second floor I seemed to get as cold as a dead man, and when I turned the handle of the only door that showed a light inside I came slam-bang upon a woman's shape, but, God in heaven, she had the face of the devil!"

He shuddered again and great drops of moisture gathered on his forehead as he slowly reached that dreadful vision.

With a gulp he swallowed the whisky and attempted to rise.

"Help me get rid of this thing," he begged, "for so long as that cursed face is before me I'll never be able to go back on duty!"

Together they finally left the place and with a sigh of relief, largely mixed with terror, the proprietor promptly put up his shutters.

The cool night air seemed to revive the officer and at last, with the instinct of his class, he longed to grapple with the mystery.

He was going over the details once more as they walked along, but half-way across the square his curious story was interrupted. They had come suddenly upon a peculiar figure—a gentleman evidently, in evening dress, but bareheaded and with a look in his face that warned them at once he had lost his reason.

"Take her away!" he screamed to them shrilly as they reached his side. "Take her away or her face will kill me!"

Then as both men held him by the arms, trying, if possible, to learn from his speech some clue to his identity, he rambled on in an excited way that was almost terrible to his listeners.

"What did they do to change her so? She was once so beautiful—so beautiful! My God! Is *this* the wife of my heart? No! It is a fiend! An inhuman monster! Take her away, I say, or I will never enter my home again! You were my friend. Why did you tell me to go in there?"

With troubled glances, the two men looked at each other.

"Here seems to be another victim of that awful *something*," the Roundsman said in an anxious manner. "Do try, Dave, to think what's happened. You were probably drugged or knocked out in some way, but if you try——"

"No, no! It's no use!" the other said sadly. "I can't think of anything but the face of that woman!"

And then the man between them demanded their attention, for he reeled suddenly forward and would have fallen had not the policemen grabbed him. The strength of both his mind and body seemed about departing in the hour of rescue. "There's a light in this doctor's office," the Roundsman said quickly. "Let's take him in there till we can call the wagon!"

The man reeled forward and would have fallen had not the policemen grabbed him.

But repeated ringing of the bell brought them no answer. A few steps farther down the block there was another sign and here there was not only a light but they were amazed to find the front door open. As they carried their burden up the step a voice in the hall made them stop and listen.

"You have had a terrible fright," the physician from up the block was saying, "but with rest and quiet you will probably be all right in the morning."

Then he came out and met the trio on the steps, but a few words sufficed for explanation.

"Take him back to my office," he said at once. "My friend, Dr. S., is ill this evening."

Strangely enough not a paper could be found on the sick man's person whereby to identify him or locate his residence, although the evening dress may have accounted for it—there was nothing in his pockets but a pack of cards, two poker chips and a little money.

In his watch was the picture of a beautiful woman—no one once seeing could forget those fair features.

After the ambulance had relieved him of his patient, and the officers returned to their respective duties, Dr. Williams, a clever clairvoyant, sat down to try and test his skill in the curious mystery that had come before him.

Trial after trial resulted in failure; his power of "second sight" seemed strangely weak this morning. He glanced at the clock—it was half-past three—perhaps an hour's sleep would restore his vision.

He awoke at five, in profuse perspiration. Already the unseen power was controlling his will, and a subtle influence at work in his brain was leading him on to forbidden pastures.

He felt at the very first a presence near him of a contending spirit—it was as if some evil fiend was trying to overcome his mediumistic prowess.

He battled manfully against the influence, grappling with it in a mental struggle, and throwing it from him, after a bitter fight, solely by the awful strength of his noble nature.

It was such a dwarfed and uncanny thing—such a dark and loathsome spirit that defied his wisdom. He recognized from the first its extraordinary power, its perfect knowledge of diabolical magic, but feeling sure that it was this unclean thing that had crept abroad, and that had cast the spell upon his friend, the doctor, he wrestled with it in the vistas of darkness, then trampled it in the mire as he emerged upon a fairer prospect.

The lights were dull before his eyes at first—deep, solemn grays that melted into purple. Around him rose the mists of uncertainty, but as he sank deeper and deeper into that death-like trance, fine golden rays began traversing the horizon, and soon, in the full scope of his wondrous sight, burst forth the glorious light of heaven.

First there came a woman's face, pale, starry-eyed, and of charming contour. She was bred in wealth and surrounded by love, but, alas, to her home had crept the serpent—that reptile he had met at first and trampled upon ere his trance became perfect. It had come in the form of a human being, a small, dark man of Oriental features, cunning and affable in speech, but capable of an undying malice.

To him base gold was the breath of life; woe to the man who should deprive him of it!

In panorama, as clear as day, the sleeper saw him at a table with the fair one's husband; cards were in progress; the game was poker—the husband won *and the black fiend cursed him.* But the curses were hidden by a smile, and the hand of the serpent was outstretched and cordial.

A dark, dank vapor crossed his sky—was it possible that he had not killed the creature?

Now he saw woe and horror on the fair young face, and woe and grief for those who loved her. The vision of an open door, lowering like portals of the dark unknown, was looming up on his brain's horizon; mortals with white, frightened faces and uplifted hands seemed constantly passing and repassing the threshold.

As each entered they wore hopeful looks, and the steps of each were light and buoyant, but as they passed out after an interval of time, there were only blanched cheeks and distorted lips, and the cry of them all was of some fearful vision.

He awoke with the horror of it still upon him. He had learned nothing tangible from his sleep and the disappointment was overpowering.

When the sun rose he went out again and visited his friend the doctor.

"I tell you, the thing was a woman's face!" his friend repeated, over and over.

Leaving the house with determined steps, he started forth on a strange undertaking.

The picture of an open door, flung wide upon darkness and desolate space, seemed firmly imprinted upon his memory. Block after block he walked, gazing right and left at the massive doors that bore silent witness to costly dwellings.

Why did he pause at this special street? Was it a human voice that so softly called him?

Half-way down the block he found it, an open door that he would not have noticed had not the vision of his trance been so plainly before him.

He stood and gazed until his sight grew dim—he was conscious of feeling himself a conqueror.

Why were those blinds so tightly drawn? Were they mocking his efforts to see beyond them??

He called a policeman from the nearest post and together they returned to the house and entered.

Not a soul could be found on the lower floors, the servants, even, had all deserted.

Over and over the searchers grew sick and faint. It seemed as if the air was tainted with noxious vapors.

Upstairs they passed in silent haste, entering and inspecting each empty chamber.

And at last they came upon the crime they sought—a man lying dead upon his mistress' carpet—at least, this was what they thought at first, but they found him breathing when they examined him more closely.

It was not a servant, as they supposed, but a gentleman in full evening dress. They found a card from his club in his pocket.

A trifling search disclosed the name of his host, and on an easel before them was the life-sized portrait of that beautiful woman whose face, in miniature, the doctor had gazed upon early that morning.

But the fair young hostess could not be found, and not a soul was left in the place to explain the secret of her disappearance.

Carefully and with the greatest skill, the almost dying man was restored to consciousness. There was a look of horror in his eyes when he opened them at last, and gazed slowly around upon his strange surroundings.

To him the details of the past night were perfectly clear, the shock had not dethroned his reason.

As his strenth came back, he told them briefly of that vision of a face, that awful sight he had so suddenly encountered, and which seemed to him to be a hideous dream, from which he with difficulty had awakened.

"She was the wife of my friend," he told them weakly, "I had been playing cards with him all the evening. As I passed the house on my way home I became suddenly convinced that something was wrong, and of course I did my best in the matter.

"I dared not go in until I was sure I was needed, for I was both her own and her husband's friend, and the world would doubtless have misconstrued it.

"I waited on the steps until one after another of her intended rescuers had deserted her, but with her husband's weak and hurried flight I put aside all scruples and boldly went to her assistance.

"The house was dark and silent as the grave, but all the air seemed permeated by some subtle odor, some strangely soporific scent that made me almost immediately drowsy. Half-way up the stairs a small, dark fellow touched my shoulder, and at his touch my limbs refused to act, and for a moment I was in serious danger of falling.

"How I reached her door I do not know, but once inside, I saw her graceful form, noticed, even in my anxiety, the red lights glinting in her hair, then as she turned I thought I was going mad, for her perfect face had become a demon's.

"From a purple putrifying mass of flesh one dull red eye glared at me fiercely. There were tears of blood dripping down her cheeks—her lips were blue and her fangs were terrible.

"It was a vision of corruption surrounded by grace—the face of a ghoul on the shoulders of a woman.

"There was rapacious fury in the horrible eye and those blue lips leered at me with such lecherous intent that my blood turned to ice in the fear that she would touch me.

"Only a monster could conjure that face, for its expression was the embodiment of every known evil.

"There were flashes of fire before my eyes and a horrible stench oppressed my nostrils. I felt that I was in the grasp of death—then I fell before her in senseless horror."

Dr. Williams listened but did not speak—he was mentally solving this hideous problem.

The officer's report to the sergeant at the station had been preceded by a somewhat rambling one from the lips of his still dazed brother officer, and slowly, as the facts leaked out, the wheels of the law were set in motion.

Dr. Williams supplied what information he could, but wisely refrained from submitting his mental evidence.

Law is not governed by "second sight" and the visions of a clairvoyant, no matter how thrilling, would not be accepted in the courts of justice.

They must take their ways and he would his—perhaps the results would be mutually gratifying.

The owner of the fated house was quickly found, they were caring for him at the hospital still, for he was none other than the unfortunate man whom the officers had found in the early morning.

Days passed before he entirely recovered, but at last his reason returned again and the cause of his condition seemed to be swallowed up in the fearful uncertainty of his wife's existence.

But where was the fair young mistress of the house? There were scores of people searching for her.

The days passed by and still no news; was she living or dead? No one could answer.

Dr. Williams tried daily to pierce the veil, but each time when he ventured to scan the future some fiendish spirit seemed to thwart his purpose.

"The knave is strong in magic, but weak in flesh—I will wear him out some day," he argued.

And three weeks later something happened which proved convincingly his mastery of this occult practice.

Sitting at his desk he heard his office door open, and without even rising or turning his head he knew that he was in the actual, bodily presence of that evil spirit which had hitherto crossed his path only in the mazes of his mental wanderings.

He felt the dull, sickening sense of contact with a noxious object, but immediately rallying from the feeling, he rose and went forward to receive his visitor.

It was a small, dark, sinister-looking face that was turned toward him in the act of greeting, and below the face there was a wasted form that told of dread disease and approaching dissolution.

The man was well dressed and affable in manner—it was evident that he recognized no antagonistic presence.

On the contrary, he had come for aid to the very man who, of all the world, possessed the power to encompass his ruin.

Flushing with victory, yet acting with the utmost caution, the clever physician proceeded to entrap his victim. During the examination that followed he probed his will and sounded resolutely his occult knowledge, then before the intensity of his own desires could arouse the suspicion of his patient, he brought the full force of his concentrated power upon him, and was more than gratified at the result which followed.

Too late the wretched culprit awoke to the knowledge of his helplessness. As his eyelids drooped in answer to the commanding will he struggled valiantly to throw off the fetters, but the bodily weakness (which the physician depended upon to aid him) proved a stumbling-block too cumbersome to be resisted.

Gradually he dropped into a fitful sleep that deepened as the spell fell heavier upon him. The close-drawn veil of his soul was rent and the foul, black depths of his hideous nature lay bare before the physician's eyes. He saw it all now, the horror of that dreadful night, but to learn the full details from his victim's lips was the sole ambition of his weeks of labor.

Sternly he commanded the wretch to speak, then prepared himself to watch and listen.

Then came the story of that poker game, and the loss of a sum that was to him a fortune. The curse on his lips had been stopped solely by a coward's fear of his opponent, but the vow for vengeance sank deep in his soul and, taking firm root, developed swiftly.

Cunning and affability were his weapons, and the incredulity of an honest man the field for his eager, hellish labor.

He had met the wife of the man who won his money, and through her he now determined to wreak his vengeance.

She was proof against flattery, so he, perforce, employed one by one his tricks of magic. Like a child she yielded to his power, and the husband also became an easy victim.

Powders and brews of his native land added strength to his own mesmeric prowess, and the night upon which he had determined to abduct her from her lovely home he had come well supplied with these deadly mixtures.

In the midst of his efforts to control her will, servant after servant had come to her assistance, and acting with the ferocity and fiendishness of his class, he had cast upon each a mesmeric spell that forced them to obey his slightest wishes.

They saw as he saw and heard as he heard, and when finally they glanced at their mistress' face, the sight sent them flying on wings of terror.

For with fiendish imagination he had conjured a face which was as hideous as his diabolical brain could conceive, and then, while they were under his hateful spell, he thrust it before them as the face of their mistress.

Blind to the features that were actually before them, they could only see the conjured vision without understanding or even questioning.

It was the supreme conquest of a mesmerist's will—the astounding success of a magician's prowess.

Over and over he had been forced to resort to this power, for it seemed as if there were no end to the interruptions in his evening's programme. Men had entered the house at unthought-of hours, but the poisons with which he had tainted the air made them all easy prey to the craft of his magic.

Advancing up the stairs a subtle aroma would fill their brains—queer, sleepy sensations would creep over their members, and with the expertness and swiftness of his devilish skill he would promptly overcome and control their senses.

Thus had he led her from her husband's home, and thus had he avenged his imagined wrong at the hands of the man who had won his money.

Leaving her in a cab in a darkened street, he had fled to a saloon to revive his members, but the worn-out nerves would not respond and, forgetting her entirely, he had fallen into slumber.

With the last words of his confession the fiend's jaw fell and his face took on a deathly pallor.

"Awake! You shall not escape me thus!" the physician shouted as he grasped his shoulder.

"You, who have done this fearful wrong, do you think that death shall save you from punishment? Awake to your poor, vile self once more! I demand the fate of your innocent victim!"

But the cunning of Satan had fled from his eyes, and they only remained wide open and staring.

The powerful will that had controlled men's minds was powerless to restore his own base instincts. The lines of his face became drawn and tense—the blue veins swelled with a sudden horror.

Before his dying gaze there had come a vision that froze the blood in his guilty heart.

Was it the conjured vision of that fearful face with which he had tortured his fellow mortals?

Dr. Williams stood silent in baffled rage—death, cold and voiceless, had prevented his victory.

But, no, there came a peal at the bell—the hand of the law had kept pace with his visions.

Two detectives entered in search of their prey, but stopped when they saw that death was before them.

"We have found her," they said, more softly, when they saw the dead face. "It seems that the villain was trying to abduct her. The driver suspected some evil, he says, so as quick as this little black wretch left the cab, he drove her, like mad, to the home of his mother.

"She is safe with her husband," they added, "and now we'll send word for the morgue man to come and relieve you."

Our next number will contain a story by Beulah Poynter, author of the play "The Unborn."

STAKING HIS PARTNER

By HON. GEORGE R. MALBY

THE glare of the yellow lamplight shone through the smoke mist which filled the main room of Dutch Jake's Yellow Dog Hotel in the Copperhead Canyon, and save for an occasional deep-toned oath and the click, click of the bone chips there was a surprising stillness in the den, for in all the canyon there had never before been played such a stiff game of poker. Scores of the "best" citizens were lookers-on at the manipulation of the cards by the five players.

It was a lively game, and the man who was caught bluffing lost the pot, and in such cases the pot was well worth the winning.

It was a table stake game, and besides the piles of red, white and blue chips there were little heaps of brown buckskin bags, each of which contained about a hundred dollars worth of gold-dust strewn about the rough table.

No one was more exultant than I was, for my partner was in the game and had for nearly an hour held most phenomenal hands and won at least twelve thousand dollars. This was extremely satisfactory to me, for Jim and I had pooled our issues for the game, and were to divide the profits or losses, as the case might be.

It wasn't everybody who cottoned on Jim. He was too quiet and wasn't much of a drinker, but if ever there was one, he was a poker fiend. As a poker player Jim had the respect of the entire camp, for who could bluff with such nonchalant grace, as though he didn't care a rap whether he were called or not? Who ever lost with such a smiling calm, or such quiet good-nature?

And so it happened that this match game of poker had been arranged for the boys with a combination of sporting blood and gold-dust. The whole camp was interested, and many side bets as to the winner of the freeze-out had been freely made. The odds, however, were on Jim.

The great game began about nine o'clock at night, and at four o'clock in the morning the shuffle, cut and deal was still going on; and while many of the spectators had gone to their cabins, there was still a dense ring of dark faces surrounding the players, upon which the dim light shone with an everchanging radius of brightness and shadow, sometimes turning brown eyes red, or blue eyes green.

"A potter's field ghoul couldn't have worse luck!" and Dandy Mack threw down a ten full with a terrible curse, which we all carefully noted in our minds for use the first time we had occasion to need a particularly strong expression of feeling, for Dandy really enjoyed the distinction of swearing the most original and soul-stirring oaths of any man at the mines.

Dandy was broke; didn't have a dollar left, and his friends probably couldn't have raised ten bits between 'em. When Dandy staggered out, with his white face looking all the most ghastly from the dull, smoke-shrouded light, a general feeling that the end was approaching seemed to impress every one, and the ring of faces drew closer as the cards were shuffled for a new deal.

I was leaning on the high back of Jim's chair. To his left sat "Kansas" Pete, a raw-boned giant with a great black beard. Next to him was Dandy Mack's empty chair, and opposite to us sat Frenchy. I can see him now. A middle-sized man, smooth shaven, with a square jaw, blue eyes and low forehead, which looked higher because of a partial baldness through a wisp of dun-colored hair, forming a little peninsula where a parting ought to be.

On our right sat a young fellow from the East, whom we called the "Scholar," because it was said he had been to a real college. It was his deal, and Jim anteed a blue chip (worth $25), and picked up his cards. I saw that he had three six-spots, and felt glad when Pete tossed in two blues, and was still sanguine when Frenchy made it $100 to play. All the rest stayed.

When cards were drawn, I noticed that Jim had not bettered, and Frenchy won on a pat flush, and that was the beginning of that fiend's luck, and of the end of the game.

I will say this for Frenchy—he was a game player, but a mean man, though maybe I am prejudiced.

Well, Jim dealt, and Frenchy won nearly $2,600, most of it from Jim, and I groaned aloud as that man raked in the pile of chips and gold-dust.

"I reckon yer got a streak, Frenchy," was all that Jim said as he cut the cards for Pete's deal.

Jim picked up his five cards, and I could have shouted for joy, as one after the other he skinned down four aces and a six-specker of diamonds—never-to-be-forgotten cards.

Frenchy had made the ante $50, call $100, and the Scholar came in.

"Two hundred," remarked Jim.

Kansas Pete dropped.

"Five hundred," said Frenchy, after peering at his cards a minute.

The Scholar quit.

"One thousand," announced Jim, shoving in a number of brown bags.

"Two thousand," said Frenchy.

Jim made sure he still had his four aces.

"One thousand better," he said.

Frenchy stayed.

"Smear 'em 'round," he said to Pete, "and give me the top one."

"He's got four of a kind, sure," I whispered in Jim's ear as the latter also took one card.

"Bet 'em up, Jim," remarked some one in the crowd.

"Cover that, Frenchy," and Jim deliberately counted out $2,000, and pushed it into the pot.

"I see yer plunks and raise yer $5,000," coolly remarked Frenchy.

There was a pause, followed by a general shuffling of feet and a sort of combination gasp as the ring of spectators pressed closer around the table. Then somebody turned the lamps up higher and Jim carefully counted out $5,000, which he pushed into the middle of the table, and then counted over what he had left.

"Only got about three thousand dollars left, Frenchy, 'less yer'll take me partner here," said Jim, glancing up into my face with a smile in his eyes.

"I'll take 'im for two t'ousand, ef he's a-willin," said Frenchy.

"Sure," says I.

"Five thousand up, then," was Jim's answer.

"Five t'ousand more," said that double-dyed fiend, pushing in $10,000, and Jim's aces began to look uncommonly small.

"Ain't got nothin' left," remarked Jim ruefully.

"Got yer claim," was the answer.

"Call yer with that, if it goes," said Jim.

"It goes."

"Aces," says Jim.

"Flush," says Frenchy.

"Four aces," says Jim.

"Straight flush," says Frenchy.

Several of Dandy Mack's oaths came in very handy. Even Jim swore.

Of course, this hand ended the match amidst the greatest excitement.

"What did ye raise before the draw for, Frenchy?" asked "Monkey" Mike, and all present awaited the reply with great interest.

"Had a hunch," was the answer.

Turning to me, my owner remarked:

"Ya won't run away ef I let ye go home to my new claim?"

"I'll be there in the morning," I replied, with as much dignity as I could assume.

"Ah may want ye to hang yourself, then," said the Canuck, with a malicious laugh.

"It won't do you any good if you do, mister," I replied with a sneer.

"Jaintlemin, didn' I win heem all right? Don' he life belan' to me? Ef I say 'hang,' he hang, don' he?"

"That's right," said two or three voices. But nearly everybody scowled.

"Well, he'll have to do the hanging then, if he don't get hurt trying," I said, and marched out of the Yellow Dog Hotel with a curse, and found Jim waiting for me.

"I didn't mean for ter bet yer, pard; it was only a joke, till that black devil took me up so quick. He ain't got a grudge again' ye, has he?"

"I guess he feels sore about that call-down last week," and I started for my owner's new claim, with Jim keeping step beside me.

"I don't s'pose I got any right to camp here any more," remarked Jim in a regretful tone, coming to a full stop at the door of the shack we called home.

"Come in. I can't keep you out. I'm only a slave threatened with a hanging," was my bitter answer.

"Don't ye be afeared o' the hangin', pard," said Jim. "I'll shoot the pot-grabbing chunk of carrion on sight, s' 'elp me, ef he tries any funny business with ye," and he stamped on the floor of the shack, first with one foot and then with the other, until every board and beam rattled a protest to such violence.

After a few more words we turned in, and just as the sun crowned the glittering snow peaks with coronets of rubies and opals, accentuating the dark somber shadow of the canyon, we went sound to sleep.

It seemed to me that I had only closed my eyes for a few minutes when I was awakened by some one shaking me by the shoulder, and, opening my eyes, I looked into the muzzle of a six-shooter.

The shanty was full of armed men, two of whom held Jim between them, while he stared about him in startled amazement.

"Are you fellows going to help Frenchy to hang me?" I asked, at the same time sitting upright in my bunk.

"We're a-goin' to hang ye right enough, an' all on account of Frenchy, but he ain't got nothin' to do with it, as you well know."

"Well, I don't know any reason for my being hanged, except that Frenchy threatened last night to hang me, and as I belong to him, you haven't any right to rob him."

"Damn me if you ain't a cool one! Frenchy was found dead not two hundred yards from here this morning, and nary a dollar left on him."

"Murdered!" was all I could stammer. And I know that I looked guilty, for at that moment all the circumstances flashed through my mind, and I even glanced suspiciously at Jim, so upset was I.

"Yes, murdered," answered my captor, "and by you and Jim thar. We boys is goin' to swing ye on Johnny's oak as a warnin' to poker players what can't lose right."

"I swear to you, boys, that the last we saw of Frenchy was at Jake's last night after the game. We came home and went to sleep. That's dead straight."

"You'll be dead straight, too, pretty soon," remarked some one, and the crowd laughed at the ghastly joke.

"It was bad enough to 'do' the Canuck, but when it comes to a-robbin' of dead bodies, we draws the line," said another.

"Boys," said Jim, "we're innercent, an' if we robbed Frenchy, ye'll find the dust near by. Ef ye do, I ain't got a word to say. Only give us a show fer our lives."

"We don't think ye'd be fool enough to keep the stuff on ye," said Kansas Pete, and the next moment we were hustled out of the cabin and headed straight for the lonely oak-tree, which struggled hardily for existence near the Yellow Dog Hotel.

Wakened out of a sound sleep, charged with a terrible crime and hurried to execution with a rope already around my neck, I felt as though I must be dreaming—that the whole affair was some terrible nightmare; but, alas, I too soon realized that only a miracle could change the awakening from being in the next world.

Curiously enough, I did not feel frightened or nervous. Neither did the manifold sins of a careless career trouble my conscience. I simply felt a morbid curiosity as to how it felt to be hanged, and whether I would kick much. I hoped I wouldn't appear ridiculous.

In an incredibly short time Jim and I were standing side by side under a slanting limb of Johnny's oak. My old partner was pale, and there was a suspicious twitching about the corners of his mouth. As for me, I was told later that I sported a vacuous smile and tried to see the end of my nose by looking cross-eyed.

The ropes were over the branch, and a score of men were tailed onto the ends, ready to run us up when the word should be given.

Suddenly there was a pause; nothing had been said, but a hush fell on the crowd and a bright streak of sunshine streamed through a great rift in the mountain-side, and it lit up the stern faces around us and shone upon Jim's, covering him with a glory of light, as though bathing him in a halo of innocence.

Kansas Pete was the first to break the silence.

"Ef you fellers have got anything to say, spit it out quick!"

Jim turned slowly about, gazing at the ring of bronzed, pitiless faces, though here and there was one whiter than usual.

"Boys," he said in a voice which, though husky at first, grew strong and clear, even defiant, as he proceeded, "boys, you fellers has come as near committin' a murder as ever was done in these parts. My partner here"—and he nodded toward me, but without looking at me—"is as innercent of hurtin' Frenchy as—as Jake's yaller dog. It was me what killed the Canuck. I laid fer him and jabbed

him with my knife. My partner here was sound asleep. That's all. But ye got ter let him go."

For a moment the proverbial pin, if such a thing had been in camp, could have been heard to drop when Jim finished speaking. Some one took the rope from about my neck, cut the cords which bound my arms, and gave me a gentle push.

Then I woke up.

A wave of horror thrilled every nerve in my body.

The next moment Jim was in the air. With a terrible yell I drew my knife, and with a leap I had severed the fatal rope and Jim fell in a heap at my feet, while a dozen men at the other end of the rope tumbled over each other.

"Hold on!" I cried. "Jim and I live or die together. He is as innocent as I am. Are we the only ones that lost to Frenchy last night? Where is Dandy Mack? I stood over Jim's half-conscious form and brandished my knife.

A score of pistols leaped from their holtsers.

"One moment!" I cried again. "Where's Dandy Mack? He is not here! Find him—find him! He's the man—I tell you he's the man!"

"Yes, let's find him," cried a dozen voices. Jim was saved.

Dandy Mack was found, the money recovered, and it was returned to Jim. That night there was a great run on the bar of the Yellow Dog; and Dutch Jake still tells of Jim's great bluff, when he staked his life to save the partner he had lost.

"What's become of Jim, did you ask? Well, I'll introduce you to him when he comes in. We're partners still."

HOW WE GOT FIRST SEEDLESS ORANGES

IN 1872 United States Consul to Bahia, Brazil, Mr. W. E. Judson, was told by the natives that some sixty miles inland, up the Amazon, were native orange-trees bearing fruit without seeds, says *Popular Science Monthly*. Accordingly he sent natives after tree shoots and some of the fruit. The shoots were packed in moss and clay and sent to Washington. They were set out by the Agricultural Department, but attracted little attention until the next year, when Horatio Tibbetts, of Riverside, Cal., took the surviving four shoots to his home and planted them. One died and another was eaten up by a cow. At the end of five years the two surviving trees bore sixteen handsome seedless oranges. Next year the oranges were even better, and the trees bore about a box of the fruit.

From that time on the cultivation of the seedless oranges about Riverside progressed rapidly. As there were no seeds to raise the trees from, it was found necessary to graft buds of the seedless trees into seedling trees.

Riverside has grown from a small village to a town of fifteen thousand acres devoted to the cultivation of navel oranges. It is the greatest orange-producing locality in the world. The two original trees were fenced about and carefully guarded lest harm should come to them, and they are now enjoying a green old age.

COFFEE CAME FIRST FROM ABYSSINIA

ABYSSINIA is the original home of the coffee-tree, and in the southern and western highlands of that country there are still immense forests of it that have never been touched.

In a report to the Department of Commerce, Addison E. Southard, United States Consul at Aden, says:

"It is from the name 'Kaffa' that the word 'coffee' is said to have come. All accounts as to the introduction of coffee to the world do not agree, but the weight of the evidence is to the effect that the Arabs in about the eleventh century brought coffee from Abyssinia, calling it the fruit of the tree of Kaffa, from the Abyssinian province in which they got it. Seeds were planted in Arabia and developed the fine coffee known to-day as Mocha. Due to cultivation and the change of soil and climate, the Mocha coffee is a very great improvement over the Kaffa stock from which it originated.

"When, according to history, the Arabs overran Abyssinia in the fifteenth century and occupied the gerat agricultural province of Harrar, they brought Mocha coffee seeds, which were planted, and this coffee is to-day the principal agricultural crop in that province. Thus we have the two kinds of Abyssinian-grown coffee; the indigenous and uncultivated plant in southern and western Abyssinia and the cultivated Harrar plant, which originated from the same indigenous stock, but which is very much superior, owing, presumably, to cultivation and to its having come into the eastern part of the country via Arabia, instead of direct, as might well have been the case."

BEES ACCURATE CLOCKS

BEES, said to be the most intelligent of insects, have a remarkable knowledge of time. Professor Conklin, of the University of Pennsylvania, is of the opinion that bees have also a powerful memory, which is the reason, he asserts, that a bee flying half a mile away from its hive returns safely to its shelter. It observes closely the landmarks passed on the outward journey.

An owner of several hives of bees, noting the diligence they observed in their work, was induced to investigate if time could be accurately gauged by his swarms. For several weeks he had his meals on the terrace of his house, breakfast being served promptly at seven o'clock, when preserves were used as a light repast.

Most of the contents of the table were allowed to remain until luncheon at 10 a. m. At noon the mid-day meal was served, but without sweets. At 4 p. m. there was a light lunch, with sweets, which remained on the table for half an hour or so. As a further inducement, a dish of stewed cherries was put to cool on a window near by, and in a few hours the whole swarm of bees were sucking the sweet juice.

This incited the bees to visit the window regularly. The dish was afterward moved to the table, and was discovered by one of their number. On the morrow several companies were at the feast, and every day the number increased. At first the bees arrived at all hours, but soon they realized there was "nothing doing" between 7 and 10 a. m. and 4 p. m., so the visits were ceased, except at the meal hours.

This ingenious bee clock in time became the gardener's timepiece, and for months they were "rung on" at 7 a. m. to commence work, almost mechanically the insect-gong sounded promptly at 10 a. m. for lunch, and work was ceased as the bees chimed out the hour of 4 p. m.

ALL IN A SLEIGH

By JOHN HABBERTON

"JACK BRIGHT," said the oldest of three rosy young women, who appeared one morning at a certain Western village post-office, "we came in to say that the last snowstorm ended three days ago, and the roads ought to be well packed by this time, and as sure as my name's Rose Wittleby, a lot of us girls will simply die unless we can have a jolly straw-ride."

"You shall have the ride," Jack replied promptly, "for I can't afford to have any of you die until I learn which of you all is going to be good-natured enough to marry me. I'll speak to some of the boys to-day, and we'll find out which of the sleighs in the country around is biggest and least uncomfortable."

"If Vinewood men had as much spirit as other Western men," said a young woman with large, black eyes and full red lips, "our town would have a comfortable big sleigh, with real seats, like they have over at Millway."

"Maybe so, Miss Luce," replied the postal-clerk. "Still, one Vinewood man, all by himself, has spirit enough to secure that Millway sleigh by telephone, unless it's already engaged, if you'll promise to sit beside him on the ride."

"I wonder who the young man can be?" asked Rose with a roguish look that made Kate Luce's cheeks as red as her lips, while the girl replied:

"That's real cruel of you, Jack, for you know my guardian sends Luke Trimmer everywhere with me, just as if I needed special protection, and Luke never leaves my side."

"I'll sit with you, Jack," said Rose Wittleby with a smile that would have bewildered any young man not already in love with some other woman. "I'm the only girl of the set who hasn't a sweetheart, so you may talk as much nonsense to me as you like. We want a dance, too, and a supper. Good-by."

As the young women departed, old Squire Jones, who had been caressing the stove-pipe in the outer office, shuffled to the letter window, and remarked:

"Jack Bright," said the oldest of the three girls to the postal clerk, "us girls want to have a jolly straw-ride."

"Lively gals them is, Jack."

"They're just that," was the emphatic reply, "and they're as good as they are lively, bless 'em! It makes a man feel that he amounts to something in this world, especially when he's looked up by such splendid creatures."

"Ef I was a young feller," said the genial squire, "an' not already purvided for matter-monially, do you know what I'd do? I'd just up an' make love to that black-eyed, red-lipped Kate, an' I'd get her to name the day—that's what I'd do!"

"Well, Mr. Jones," said Jack Bright with a sigh, "you're not the first man that's thought of it. I believe every young man in this town has often thought himself in love with that girl, and some of them haven't stopped thinking so. But what can they do? That guardian of hers—her mother's second husband, won't let any man but Luke Trimmer have a moment alone with her. If a chap goes up there to call any evening, he's politely treated, but Luke Trimmer is there on guard, just as he is over most of the old man's other property, and those who have tried to sit there until Luke went away have never cared to try it a second time."

"It's the old man's way to get the use of any of his second wife's money, that's now the gal's own, for Kate come of age a few days ago; my wife remembers when she was born. You can bet your life that him an' Luke's got some business arrangement about dividin' that cash after Luke marries the gal."

"Oh, hold up," said Jack with a frown. "The idea of Luke Trimmer marrying a girl that's all heart."

"Schemers most generally get what they're after, no matter how nice an' good it is," drawled the squire, "onless

somebody else is too smart for 'em. Besides, Luke can make himself agree'ble when he wants to, and the coldest man would want to when he's in the company of a gal like Kate Luce, 'specially if the gal's got a few thousand dollars in her own right. He made himself so 'greeable to Rose Wittleby a few years ago, before Kate's mother died, an' 'fore Kate was growed up, that he knocked her out of her chance to marry any other feller. I know what I'm talkin' about; Rose ain't the kind that worries an' pines away; she'll go on bein' handsome an' jolly as long as she lives, an' nobody 'll ever have a chance to call her an old maid, even if she never gets a husband, as it don't seem likely she will, but I've got as much a grudge agin the feller for what he done—just as much as ef the gal was my own darter—yes, sir. Oh, he's a schemer from Schemerville, that Luke Trimmer is."

"I wish," said Jack, with the manner of a man talking to himself, "that there was more of the schemer in my own blood."

"Well," said the squire, "seein' that you've got a realizin' sense of your weakness, why don't you get an old man to help you?"

Jack quickly recovered the brisk business air peculiar to model post-office clerks and exclaimed:

"What are you driving at, squire?"

"Drivin' straight at you, Jack Bright. If you want a chance to make love to Kate Luce, an' you know how to do it in earnest when you get the chance, an' you'll let me manage the job, I——"

"Oh, pshaw!"

"Never mind, then," said the old man, shuffling away and again caressing the stove-pipe. "P'raps Luke 'll gimme the contract to help his business along."

"Oh, come, squire; talk English. What do you mean?"

"Why, I mean that 'tain't been for nothin' that I've been a justice of the peace, duly quallerfied to marry folks, for the last thirty years. Ef I'd lived in this town, instead of across the river an' in a farmin' deestrick of a different State, I'd have been rich, instead of just a leetle forehanded. It's been to my int'rest to encourage the marryin' spirit, purvided the right couples were pairin' off, an' I've always found my wife, God bless her, could set me right on that subject. When I did give some help to a couple that was bein' troubled in some way by outsiders, an' I saw 'em through, it was human natur that they should come to me instead of a minister when they got ready to marry, 'specially as across the river, in my State, no license has to be got an' paid for, to say nothin' of me bein' a church member in good standin', an' likely to put in some p'inted words of admonition when any was needed in the ceremony. Well, all this talk's a kind of preparatory lecture, such as they give candidates for admission to the church, but"—here the old man slowly, tenderly left the stove-pipe and returned to the letter-window—"what would it be wuth to you to have Kate alongside of you for a couple of hours on the ride this evenin', so you could have a good, square business talk with her, in spite of Luke Trimmer?"

"Worth!" exclaimed Jack, as his eyes opened very wide and a lot of good red blood rushed to his face. "It would be worth a million dollars."

"Oh, shucks! Get down to business. Mention a sum that you can pay. You know I'm a safe driver—druv mail stage for years; never drank a drop in my life; know all the roads; can get up a hotel dinner, an' dance as good as anybody. Any of the folks in this town 'll trust their darters on a straw-ride that I'm managin'. I've chucked young fellows out of the sleigh an' left 'em to foot it home when they got too fresh."

"That's all right, squire, but come down to business yourself. Make a proposition in dollars and cents."

"All right. You give me the job of gettin' up that straw-ride. I'll get the Millway sleigh if I can, for it'll work better into my plan. Of course, you boys 'll chip in for all the expense—sleigh, supper an' the rent of the room for the dance, I payin' 'em first? I'll do it as cheap as anybody else. If durin' the evenin' I manage to get you a couple of hours beside Kate—or even one hour, which ought to be enough, if you know what to say an' how to do it—you're to go into your own pocket an' see that I get double price for ev'rythin'. How does that strike you?"

"It's a bargain."

"Good! I was wonderin' this mornin', as I tramped across the river on the ice, where on earth I was goin' to pick up a job of some kind, an' I kinder thought it would be nowhere, but the Lord looks out for His own. Guess I'll go down to the telephone office an' call up Millway."

The old man sauntered along the business street, looking into every store and down the cross streets, and soon he found what he was looking for—it was Rose Wittleby, with whom he had a short chat, which seemed to amuse that sprightly young woman greatly, although, as soon as she left the squire she looked more serious and thoughtful than any one ever saw her, except at church. As for the squire, as soon as he secured the Millway sleigh and arranged for its delivery at Vinewood, he tramped across the frozen river to his home, gave his horses extra feed to prepare them for a long drive, and then he had a long and earnest chat with his wife.

The straw-ride was a great success from the very start, for there was plenty of straw in the bottom of the Millway sleigh, plenty of blankets and buffalo robes on the seats; there were just enough people, in couples, to pack the seats comfortably, and all the couples were "engaged" except Jack and Kate, for, as it was assumed that Kate Luce was given over to Luke Trimmer in spite of herself, there was no likelihood of the heart-burnings and jealousies which sometimes make a country straw-ride as productive of misery and gossip as a swell party in the city.

"Here, you Jack Bright, Miss Wittleby, you hain't got no love-makin' to do; s'pose you sit up on the driver's seat with me!" said the squire, as the party crowded into the sleigh. "Jack's the manager of the affair, an' I want him where I can ask him questions without turnin' my head around to holler at him."

"Jack," whispered Rose, as soon as the sleigh started and while the other couples were making the various noises without which no genuine straw-ride can begin in proper fashion, "the squire has told me of the trick he is up to. It's splendid, and I wish you all the luck in the world. Kate likes you ever so much, but if you want her to love you, don't waste any time when your chance comes. She doesn't love Luke—he's never had a single kiss or an encouraging word, but he's so patient and persistent that she said only to-day that if something didn't happen pretty soon she'd have to marry him to get rid of him. Make the most of your chance to-night. Do you know what to say?"

"Why, really, Rose," stammered Jack, "I've never done such a thing before—and I—I hardly know how to begin."

"You must find out—quick! Begin right away; practise on me. Make believe that I'm Kate; I'll promise not to take it in earnest, there's no one to be jealous of you, I won't make fun of you, and wild horses can't draw a word of it out of me afterward. Begin at once; put your arm around me—there! Now say every sweet thing you can think of, and don't ask any questions."

By daylight, or even by lamplight, Rose's suggestion

would have seemed utterly ridiculous and impracticable, but older and wiser men than Jack Bright have lost their sense of the ridiculous while straw-riding by moonlight. Besides, Rose and Jack had been hearty and honest friends for years, ever since the girl, several years the older, had helped Jack through some hard lessons at school. Perhaps the arm around Rose's waist helped Jack to find his tongue; certain it is that he whispered almost incessantly for half an hour, and when the sleigh drew up at a little county town's big hotel, where the squire had ordered supper and the ballroom, Rose whispered:

"You did it quite well, but practise makes perfect, so do it all over again when we start once more."

"But when is the squire——"

"Leave that to him; he isn't going to lose his money."

The supper was good, and the dance seemed to please every one but Jack, who could not get even part of a dance with Kate Luce. His recollection of what he had been rehearsing to say to her set his heart aflame, and some of it went out to her through his eyes, and he thought—he almost believed—that there was some heart in the glances that came back.

"I wanter remark," said the squire, entering the ballroom at the end of a dance, "that the air has chilled up a right smart lot sence we come in here, more than an hour ago, an' such ladies an' gentlemen as don't want their ears an' noses friz had better wrap up warm. When do you want to start again?"

"Right off," said Jack; "you might as well break off a dance at one place as well as another, for nobody 'll stop till everybody has to." Then he drew the squire aside, and whispered:

"When am I—when will you—I mean——"

"I know what you mean," the old man whispered in reply, "and you shan't be disappointed. Bring Rose up on the front seat again, though."

So many of the young women emerged from the dressing-room with their faces swathed in veils and mufflers that certain young men complained that they could scarcely pick out their own sweethearts, whereat there was a shout of derision from the girls, and a cutting joke from the squire, who was hurrying the party through the long hall to the sleigh. Jack, finding Rose and Kate standing a little apart in the snow, was strongly tempted to snatch Kate and place her on the driver's seat; but as she suddenly turned away there was nothing for him but to resume his strange exercise with Rose. Still, as he said to himself afterward, it didn't seem a bit strange at the time. Although the strongest liquor at the supper had been sweet cider, Jack seemed to himself to be some one else or to have changed his nature. He tucked blankets and robes closely about the girl, throwing the ends but carelessly over himself; then he put his arm around her without waiting to be told.

"Pooty cold up here," remarked the squire. "I've got an extry robe here; you'd better put it around both of you like a shawl; it's got some buttons and loops along the edges."

Jack made haste to use the robe, for the girl was shivering. He said something about overheated rooms, but the spirit of the part he had been playing and was to rehearse took sudden possession of him, so he replaced his arms and began the old story. Apparently he made many additions to it—suggestions probably of some hundreds of similar old stories, for he whispered a long, long time. Unlike certain other people at rehearsal, he ventured upon some acting, for he searched about and under the robes until he found a hand, which he took in his own and pressed it to give emphasis to his words. But a glove is a damper upon emotion, so Jack withdrew his own; then—of course, Rose would know he was merely acting—he withdrew the glove from the little hand. How warm that hand was! How much it assisted the fluency of his tongue! Rose was doing all she could to assist him, for she returned every pressure of his hand. She did it gently, daintily, but certainly she returned them. If the time would ever come—oh, the hour-like moment—when Kate's heart would respond to his in such tender fashion, he would be the happiest man alive. But what a rogue Rose was! Undoubtedly she was laughing to herself—laughing at him; shouldn't he put her to confusion, just for a moment, until he could think of something new and sweet to say? He would do it—and meanwhile imagine with all his might that she was Kate; so he asked for a kiss, and explained why he ought to have it, and admitted that probably he would take a hundred.

But was Rose put to confusion? It has already been implied that Rose was a self-possessed young woman. Jack felt his hand closely pressed, while the girl's other hand stole upward along the sheltering wall of the robe, and raised a woolen muffler from the wearer's face, which turned toward Jack, and under the moonlight showed itself to be the face of Kate Luce.

"Oh!" whispered Jack; then his lips found other occupation for a period of time that has not yet been determined. But even lovers must breathe, so when Kate dropped her head on Jack's shoulder and the arm around her waist seemed to grow longer, Jack whispered:

"How did it come about?"

"Rose dared me to exchange hats and coats in the dressing-room," was the reply, "and to take her seat beside you. None of the other girls saw us do it, and as our faces were covered, she said nobody would know what was going on. It was all Rose's fault—really it was."

"But Rose didn't raise that muffler from your face a moment or two ago. Oh, Kate—darling!" Then Jack himself raised the muffler.

"How shall I ever be able to break the news at home?" asked Kate, when next she was allowed to breathe. "I'm awfully afraid of stepfather and of Luke."

"Leave that to me," said Jack—said it loudly, as if defying the world.

The squire edged toward the couple, put his face in front of them, and said:

"I'm not a-givin' any advice, but I want to say that we're on my side of the river now and in my State, an' if any people here present want to get married, an' they're of age an' there ain't any lawful impediment, I'm the man who's got the right to perform the ceremony, an' if they don't want to go back to Vinewood to-night there's my home for 'em to go to an' my wife to welcome 'em, as she's welcomed other couples in the same fix, an' there ain't a woman in the State that's got a better name an' character than that same wife of mine. What are you sayin'?"

"I'm saying 'yes,'" Jack replied. "It's the best way, Kate; don't you think so?" A squeeze of his hand was the reply, so Jack continued: "Kate says 'yes,' too."

"Stop pullin' up the gal's muffler for a minute, can't you, Jack?" asked the squire. Then he pulled up his horses, stopped them, stood up, faced about, and said:

"This couple here beside me wants to jine hands an' hearts an' lives. Has anybody got anythin' to say agin it?"

"Hurrah!" shouted some one, and the shout was taken up quite generally.

"Then, by the authority vested in me by the State, I prononunce this man and woman husband and wife. Any other couple ready? Weddin's are cheap on this side of the river—no license fee to be paid, an' my own charges ain't high. Nobody? Well, off we go again!"

Once more the muffler was lifted, and several times again, before the bride and groom were dropped at the squire's own door.

Jack was at his window at the post-office the next morning at the customary time for opening the mail. Among the letters he found one for himself, inviting him to lunch at noon with Rose Wittleby and her mother. He found Rose in a highly excited condition—all smiles and laughter, yet acting somewhat dazed.

Had she really taken some of his love-making in earnest? Jack thanked her profusely for her invaluable assistance, and asked what happened when she took Kate's place.

"Oh, I listened to a lot more love talk—'twas quite as good as yours, too, let me tell you. And he kissed me; he got my veil up to the tip of my nose."

"The scoundrel! I'll break every bone in his——"

"Be quiet, Jack! I won't have Luke Trimmer abused. I'll never hear another word said against him."

"Why, Rose, what—what's come to you?"

"My old lover has come to me. Luke Trimmer was engaged to me years ago, before Kate got out of short dresses and had some money left her. I didn't change my mind—I couldn't—I don't know how, so I'm glad his changed back again last night, after he learned what had happened. But"—and as she went on, Jack thought Rose almost as handsome as Kate—"wasn't that a perfectly splendid straw-ride?"

"Indeed it was, and I'm your debtor forever for my share of it. How can I ever repay you?"

"By standing up for my husband, whenever you hear a word said against him."

"I'll do it with all my might, and Kate shall help me. But, Rose, you're taking to that word 'husband' quickly. Are you quite sure that he won't change his mind again?"

"Absolutely, for after every one else got out of the sleigh last night Luke himself hired the squire to drive across the frozen river once more to the old man's State, and there we were married, with the man in the moon and all the angels for witnesses—at least, that was the way I felt about it. And you're to break the news to the town for us, for we'll soon be off on our bridal tour."

Jack kissed the bride, like the loyal friend that he was, but within five minutes he had put sugar on his cold chicken and salt in his tea.

MACEDONIA'S WAR-DOGS

EVERYWHERE are the dogs in Macedonia, says the *National Geographic Magazine*. In this country of shepherds every peasant's cottage has a moving fringe of dogs. In the East the dog is neither fed nor petted, so that he feels himself outcast and despised. During this war one army and then the other has swept over northern Macedonia, driving the peasants before them. The dogs have been left behind. At night one hears them howling on the desolate hills.

The tainted breeze that comes down the valleys hints at the ghastly food on which they live. By day every man shoots at every dog save the few that cling close to an inhabitated cottage. They slink, coyote fashion, behind rocks. At night one hears their feet padding behind him on the lonely roads. Their eyes shine in the flare of the electric torch. Every one carries arms in Macedonia at night, not against men, but as a protection against the dogs.

A HOME-MADE BAROMETER

A BAROMETER which will prophesy weather conditions a day in advance may be made from an ordinary incandescent bulb. Select a 60-watt lamp. One that has burned out will do, directs *Popular Science Monthly*. Hold it under water and file off the glass tip at the end of the bulb. The vacuum will cause the water to enter through the hole thus made, filling the bulb completely. The barometer should then be suspended with bulb-end downward.

When a drop of water appears suspended at the outlet, you may look for a storm to-morrow; when the drop disappears, fair weather is in store. There is a perfectly natural reason for this phenomenon. Stormy weather is always preceded by low barometric pressure. The atmospheric pressure having decreased, the weight of the water inside the bulb tends to force water through the outlet. This force is small, but it is sufficient to allow a drop of water to escape and hang suspended from the tip of the bulb. On the other hand, fair weather follows an area of high barometric pressure. The pressure of the atmosphere, under such conditions, will prevent the water from escaping and the suspended drop will be forced back into the bulb.

This simple barometer may be screwed into a wall or ceiling lighting fixture, which is out of service.

MARVELOUS MEMORIES OF WELL-KNOWN MEN

ONE of the most remarkable "men of memory" is George Harbottle, a quarry miner living near Newcastle, England. This "son of the soil" possesses a memory which retains an indelible impression of every word which he hears or reads. After once reading a dozen pages of any book he can repeat them without omitting a single word. One morning this remarkable man purchased a volume of the "Fairie Queene," and before the evening he could recite Spenser's masterpiece from beginning to end.

Viscount Milner, a member of the War Cabinet, is the possessor of a wonderful memory. He once performed an astonishing feat while private secretary to Lord Goschen. He was asked to supply a copy of his chief's address to the electors of East Edinburgh, and, failing to find the original, he wrote out the address from memory with such marvelous accuracy that on comparing it with the original it was found to contain only one trifling mistake.

Gladstone had a wonderful memory, and could "reel off" passages from Homer, Ovid and the "Iliad" at a moment's notice.

The greatest master of memory, however, was Lord Macaulay. From a very early age the retentiveness of his memory was extraordinary. When only three or four years of age his mind mechanically retained the form of what he read or heard. Once, as a child, when making an afternoon call with his father, he picked up Scott's "Lay of the Last Minstrel" for the first time, and quietly read it while his elders were engaged in conversation. When they returned home, Macaulay amazed his parents by reciting the whole of the poem without a mistake.

ALTRUISM AND CHECKERS

By JESSIE BARTLETT DAVIS

HAROLD MORTIMER'S family were at Narragansett Pier. As he sat in the dining-room of his spacious house in Fifty-sixth street, New York, on a sultry evening in August, lazily puffing his cigar while burning his cognac after dinner, he felt inexpressibly lonely. The elegantly appointed house seemed like a banquet-hall deserted. He missed the music of his children's voices. There was no one to awaken the sleeping harmonies of the piano, no gladsome smile to welcome him at the door, no baby fingers to rifle his pockets. To be sure, he had everything to satisfy his material wants. But he missed the smiling face of his wife from her place across the table. As if to add to his loneliness, he heard through the open door the sounds of laughter from the basement, and knew that Mary, the housemaid, was entertaining her lover in the kitchen, and softly quoted to himself:

"The earth was sad, e'en Eden was a wild,
And man, the hermit sighed, till woman smiled."

His mood changed from despondency to decision as he rang the bell sharply. His colored valet appeared.

"John," said he, "get my tuxedo coat and white waistcoat. I am going out. You need not stay up for me, as I shall not get back until late."

Fifteen minutes later he stepped out upon the sidewalk faultlessly attired, and sauntered toward the elevated station.

"But where the deuce shall I go?" he mused. "It will be the same old 16-to-1 chestnut at the club, varied with cocktails of which I am thoroughly tired. I shall only be bored at the roof gardens. The theaters are closed, and it is too late to go down to Coney Island. I wonder if there is a more thoroughly discontented man in all this big city than I am to-night?"

His musings were interrupted by a wretchedly dressed, unkempt fellow, who said he was starving. It occurred to Harold that perhaps here was a man who had some legitimate cause to be discontented. The thought gave him an inspiration.

"I'll devote this evening to a new form of amusement, hunting up men who have some reason to be unhappy. Come with me," he said aloud to the tramp.

He took the man to one of the most expensive restaurants on Broadway, sat down with him at a table, to the astonishment of the tramp and waiters, and filled him with the most expensive viands on the bill-of-fare, topping his recklessness off with a big Havana cigar and a half-dollar to purchase a night's lodging. As they stepped out upon the sidewalk he said:

"My good man, you are not so unhappy as you were a while ago, are you?"

The tramp looked wonderingly at Harold and tried to speak, but the words died away in his throat. The situation was too eloquent for words. Harold strolled away and left him.

Somehow he felt more buoyant. There seemed to be a new beauty in the shop windows, and the commonplace cabs flashed by with a sprightliness which they had never before exhibited.

"After all," he muttered, "it cost me only the price of three rounds of drinks at the club. The look in the man's eyes was ample payment. They've got no such exhibit on the roof gardens."

By this time he wondered where he could find another victim for his pleasantry. Just then he came opposite to a cab horse, who stood near the curb. The tired animal's head drooped wearily, while his driver was asleep on the box. It occurred to Harold that he had read somewhere that horses were fond of sugar. He walked a block further down Broadway until he reached a candy-store. He entered and bought half a pound of loaf sugar. Returning to the cab he fed the horse sugar for nearly fifteen minutes. When the sugar was exhausted and he walked away, the animal showed his affection by following him, to the utter astonishment of the driver, who had never known the animal to move of his own volition before.

By this time it was nine o'clock. It was too early to go home, and Harold stood on the corner for several minutes in deep thought. He had fallen in love with his new form of amusement, and he was anxious to consummate the evening's pleasures with some exciting phase of altruism. He was tired of billiards, satiated with bowling and—— Ha, now he had it! He would go down to Washington Square and play a game of checkers with Burleigh. Poor old Burleigh! Once a clubman and raconteur of exceptional ability, for the past two years he had been confined to his house a hopeless invalid in the unyielding grip of inflammatory rheumatism.

As he swung himself on board a south-bound car, Harold chuckled to himself as he muttered:

"I'll make the poor old fellow forget for one hour at least that he ever had the rheumatism."

Harold quickened his pace as he walked across town after leaving the car. He thought with remorse that he had not heard from Burleigh in a year. He might be dead. He was immensely relieved to hear the servant at the door say that his old friend was still alive, although confined to his room.

Burleigh lay in a wheel chair near the window, looking at the moon as it sailed over the trees in Washington Park.

"I thought you fellows had forgotten me entirely," he said, as he shook hands with Harold. "I haven't seen one of my old club associates for more than a year."

Then followed a review of club affairs by Harold, during the time since Burleigh had been confined, and then the subject of checkers was guardedly introduced. A flush came into the wan face of the invalid when Harold mentioned his favorite game.

"It is my only means of amusement nowadays," he said pathetically; "but the difficulty is that I can find nobody around here who can play with me. You know, Harold, I play a very strong game, and there is no satisfaction in playing with somebody who is putty in my hands. But you are a foeman worthy of my steel. Bring the

board over here. There it is on the table near you. There, that's better," he continued, as Harold raised him tenderly in his chair and placed some pillows behind his back. The checker-board lay across the invalid's lap, and his thin fingers trembled with eagerness as he placed the men in position.

Burleigh was an excellent player, but he was only an amateur in the hands of the more expert Mortimer. Since the time when he had last had Burleigh for an antagonist, Mortimer had mastered the game to such a degree that he could play without looking at the board by the use of the numbers. Happily, however, Burleigh was not aware of his friend's superior skill, and, feeling confident that he had before him a man who was only his equal, he entered into the contest with all his heart. Indeed, the invalid played with such serious intent that there was scarcely a word spoken during the first game, which ended in a draw.

Harold's heart beat sympathetically as he saw the flush of enthusiasm light up the invalid's cheek and the fire of battle come into his eyes as he arranged the pieces for another trial. Like a Pershing directing his battalions, Burleigh marshaled his forces, opening this time with the "Ayrshire Lassie." Rheumatism became a thing of the past as he moved up one man to take two in return. His low chuckle of exultation was sweet as music in Harold's ear as he looked at the emaciated frame of his once robust comrade. The second game ended in defeat for Harold by a close margin, whose exclamation of apparent disappointment made Burleigh laugh like a pleased child.

"Really, Harold, my boy, I thought you played a stronger game," said Burleigh in a tantalizing tone. "But we'll try again. Perhaps you will have better luck; but I give you warning that you must concentrate your forces."

And Harold did seemingly concentrate his forces; but it was not in the way that Burleigh intended. Harold was working to so distribute his men around the board that Burleigh could make one grand coup and end the game in a burst of glory for himself. This required great skill, for, if the effort was too pronounced, Burleigh's quick eye would discover it and the effect would be lost. At last only eleven men were left on the board, Harold having six and Burleigh five, the latter having the advantage in position. The invalid was intensely interested. He watched the game like a hawk and played solely on the defensive, setting two traps which commanded two-thirds of the board. While Harold was perfectly aware of those traps he appeared to be wholly unconscious of their existence, deliberately arranging his men so that Burleigh, by giving away one man, could take four in return. The situation all depended upon one critical move on the part of Harold, which was plainly understood by both men, although Harold acted as if he knew nothing about it. Harold put his finger on the critical checker, as if to move it. Burleigh watched him with his heart in his eyes. He trembled with suppressed excitement, so that the board shook like an aspen leaf. Harold moved the checker, but kept his finger upon it as if anxiously debating the expediency of the move. Then, with lingering deliberation, he raised his finger. The critical move had been made. Burleigh fell back exhausted with a sigh of relief.

"Why don't you move?" asked Harold in simulated surprise.

"My dear boy," replied Burleigh, a quiet smile of satisfaction lighting up his wan features, "there is no necessity. The game is over. Look for yourself."

Harold looked. Then he struck the table a sounding whack with his fist, and Burleigh bubbled with mirth.

"My dear fellow," exclaimed the invalid, as Harold arose to go, "you must come down here oftener and take lessons. Ha, ha!"

As the outer door closed behind Harold, a thin, piping voice, which he recognized as issuing from the deepening twilight of his friend's existence, came floating out of the window.

"Did you call, Burleigh?" he shouted back.

"Yes," came the reply in still more attenuated tones. "I wouldn't say anything about that last game at the club, if I were you. Four kings at one swoop. Good-night!"

"Well, I've made another mortal happy," thought Harold as he made his way home. "I knew that move would lose the game; but Burleigh shall never learn my secret. What's the use of living if one can't do some good in the world?"

"TURKISH" TOBACCO FROM JAPAN

A SHORTAGE in the world's supply of leaf tobacco for "Turkish" cigarettes has caused American maufacturers to turn to Japan for material to blend with other leaf in the making of Turkish or Egyptian cigarettes of cheaper grades. Japanese tobacco is milder and lighter in color than Turkish or Virginian. Its leaf is very thin, due probably to the damp climate of Japan. Tobacco can be raised in all parts of Japan, save the northeast.

At the beginning of each fiscal year the Imperial Japanese Government Monopoly Bureau estimates the amount of tobacco that will be needed to meet home and foreign demands during the coming year, and then, through its district offices, apportions to the different farmers and planters the quantities to be grown by them.

Turkish, Macedonian and Virginian tobaccos have been successfully planted in Japan and Korea. Turkish tobacco grown in Korea contains the aroma and all the good points of tobacco grown in Turkey and Macedonia.

HOW ORDER OF THE GARTER GOT ITS NAME

THE Order of the Garter, the highest honor the British sovereign may bestow and one of the most famous orders of knighthood and chivalry in history, was instituted by Edward III in 1849. It was at first known as the Order of St. George and membership was limited to twenty-five.

Edward, having been victorious on land and sea and having King David of Scotland as prisoner, initiated the order in recognition of the valor of his bravest knights. While not at first called the Order of the Garter, the garter was given pre-eminence among the insignia. It is of blue velvet, bordered with gold, with the inscription in old French, "Evil to him who evil thereof thinks." There is a tradition that the Countess of Salisbury, while dancing, lost her garter, which her partner, the king, stooped to pick up and return, whereat some of the courtiers tittered. At that Edward wrathfully shouted, "Evil to him who evil thereof thinks," and declared he would make that garter the most glorious emblem in the land.

THE QUEEN OF THE STEERAGE

By GILSON WILLETS

SOME of the passengers on the promenade deck were throwing pennies down to the children in the steerage. The pennies rolled over the canvas-covered hatch and the little bare-legged youngsters scrambled, like many pups after one piece of meat. A penny rolled overboard and a child began squeezing through the rail, to the rescue. An old crone dragged the child back and beat it. Now in the companionway appeared a sleek, long-bearded man. Espying the pennies, he joined the little scramblers.

"Give the pups a chance, hound," called one of the penny - throwers. "Hello! there's the Queen." A young girl, proud of mien but arrayed in cheap finery, made her way through the steerage herd like a peacock among swine. With a strong arm she thrust the bearded man aside and cleared the children from the hatch, like flies from a butcher's block. Then she mounted the hatch and proceeded to pick up the pennies.

The old man slunk away; the children looked back, awed; the other men and women closed around; the cabin passengers ceased throwing coins. Now the girl stood erect with her face upturned, and a hand clenching the coins poised above her head. A moment she stood thus, her lip curling disdainfully, her eyes fixed upon one of the passengers above. All eyes turned upon that passenger—a smooth-faced man of dignified, even distinguished appearance. In company with the ship's captain, who stood beside him, he had been watching the penny-throwing. Now he was staring down at the girl. Suddenly he shrank back, but with the movement a number of coins struck his face like small shot hitting a steel target.

Then something gleaming, silver-like, struck his face. Whack! Whack!!

Late that night, on the way to his stateroom, the dignified passenger strolled along the gangway which connected the forecastle with the steerage. Presently he paused. Some one was calling his name.

"Henry Sheppard!" The voice came from a porthole behind him—from his own stateroom. After peering a moment through the porthole into the black interior, he stepped into a narrow passageway, entered his room, and turned on the electric light. A woman confronted him—the girl, dark-skinned, voluptuous, coarsely handsome. She smiled mockingly. The man frowned angrily. They gazed into each other's eyes like combatants before a duel. The woman made the first thrust. "Your kitten has become a wolf."

"What does this mean?" the man asked, parrying.

"The fox ran away; the wolf followed," answered the girl.

"Woman, who are you?"

"Man, who are you?" she mimicked.

"You ask who I am," she went on ironically. "It is impossible, of course, for the employer of thousands of women to remember a certain cloak model formerly in your employ. She used to have privileges which the other girls had not. And what a very pleasant summer vacation she spent—at your country place."

She had raised her voice and the man's eyes began roving nervously. Of a sudden he brushed past the woman, closed the porthole with a bang and drew the curtain closely.

"Now, Jennie, be quick! What do you want?"

"You do know me, don't you, Henry?" the woman

sneered. "But sit down. The ship rolls a bit. It may upset your dignity." She sat at one end of the cushioned settee and he at the other. "How you do guard your dignity," she resumed. "What a great personage you are! Merchant prince! A social leader! Church pillar! When those coins struck you this afternoon, they must have weakened your social position at the base. A few more such incidents might knock away the props altogether—if it became known, for instance, that a woman visited your stateroom at midnight. Oh, don't be frightened, chaste widower. Your head is safe among the clouds even yet. But your feet are in the mud. Trample on the worms if you will, but look out for a possible snake. Better bend a little and pick your way. Listen!" She moved to his side and whispered a few words to his ear, then moved away.

The man jumped up.

"Jennie, are you lying?"

"I am not the honest Henry Sheppard," the girl answered.

The man paced forth and back between the wash-basin and the door.

"I will do what I can for you," he muttered.

The girl stood up and faced him.

"Then marry me."

The man drew in a quick breath. "Are you mad, or a fool? But don't worry, little girl. Money mends everything—even this. I will give you enough to make you comfortable. You shall have a home in any part of the world. Only you must not return to America."

The woman laughed scornfully.

"A gentlemen, are you not? A nobleman! Commercial sovereign! Church deacon! Pooh!"

"There, there, little girl," the man coaxed, stretching out his arms. "We must not quarrel. Shall we make it up? You are a superb creature, a beautiful animal. Come! Won't you kiss and—— My God! Let go! I—— I—— your hand—— Oh!"

He had gathered her in his arms and crushed her to him. She had broken away. Then she had sprung at him like a wolf attacking big game. But in her clutches he was like a rat. With both hands tightening about his throat, she banged his head against the berth.

"Promise!" she panted. "Say you will right me before my people and yours. Promise to make me your wife."

"I—I—yes!" he gasped. And she released him. He reeled over to the settee and dropped upon it, breathing like a sprinter at the end of a run.

"When?" the lost one asked.

"Oh, any time. Soon. When we reach shore. Only go."

The girl left him and returned to the steerage.

During dinner, the following evening, sailors swarmed to the larboard side of the promenade deck, dragging great bundles of bunting. When the passengers came up, flags of all nations inclosed the deck. Steamer-chairs, all facing the piano, were arranged with a center aisle, like seats in a concert hall. The sea was like a lake, and there was to be a grand concert.

Just before it was to begin, Henry Sheppard, who was to preside, stood in his stateroom brushing his hair. The door opened and the rich man turned. The outcast closed the door. "Your promise is not enough," she said. "I cannot trust you."

"Why not?" he asked.

"Because I know you too well."

Just then some one passing looked in. Sheppard jumped to the porthole, closed it and drew the curtain. Then he glared at his former cloak model.

"That was the captain, curse you!"

"You must marry me here, on board ship," she went on quietly. "You must give me your name before we sight land. I cannot trust you on shore. Ah, you know in your heart that you do not mean to keep the promise you made to me."

Sheppard looked at his watch, then turned his back on her, and brushed his hair hard and fast, with a heavy silver-mounted brush.

"There is a minister in the steerage and a clergyman in the saloon," the girl continued. "We can go before one secretly. Nothing to say? Very well! Then I shall remain with you until you find a tongue. You are going to preside at a gathering of your world, your kind. I will go with you, and make known that the woman they call 'Queen of the Steerage' is the intended wife of Henry Sheppard."

The great man turned, showing a white face. His hand closed rigidly around the hair-brush, he raised it menacingly, and stepped toward the woman.

"Strike me!" she said. Then she laughed. He had tossed the brush into the berth. "Coward!" the woman jeered. "Slave buyer! Hypocrite! Men like you make women like me! But women like me kill men like you! Will you marry me before we sight land? Going? Then I will go with you!"

Sheppard had opened the door. Passengers were hurrying through the corridor on their way up to the concert. The girl stepped forward, the door struck her violently; she staggered backward and fell on the settee in a heap.

Above, the concert began. The orator of the evening, Henry Sheppard, began his speech. Presently a woman came running up the aisle—a young woman with a wide, red mark down her face from her temple to her chin. Between rows of astonished men and women she ran, unconscious of batteries of curious eyes. Sheppard saw her coming and turned white. Words congealed in his throat. He looked appealingly at the captain, who sat directly facing him. Then something gleaming, silver-like, struck his face. Whack! Whack! The captain made a gesture. A sailor hurried forward and seized the enraged woman. Struggling, she dropped her weapon. The captain picked it up. It was a silver-mounted-hair brush. The woman fought like one mad, but another sailor came forward, and he and his mate carried the struggling woman away.

Later, when Henry Sheppard turned in, he could not sleep. After the concert he had seemed to stand on the ship alone. The passengers avoided him. Moreover, when the time came for the card game, which he usually played with the captain before turning in, the captain did not appear. Henry Sheppard's social position seemed to be tottering indeed.

"Curse that woman!" he muttered. Then he jumped up, dressed, and stepped outside. While he peered down into the deep sea, a black figure entered the long gangway from the steerage, and, crouching below the port-hole, stole swiftly to where he stood. Standing behind him, the woman gathered all her strength, like an athlete preparing for a high-jump. But Henry Sheppard did not see her. Of a sudden he was seized around the waist and lifted over the rail. Then he dropped into the sea like a wriggling, reluctant dog.

In port, long after the passengers had gone ashore, the girl came slowly down the gangplank, followed by a gendarme.

A story by Julian Hawthorne will appear in our next number.

FOUR OF A KIND

By WILLIAM R. LIGHTON

THIS happened just as I am about to relate it.

It was on a Union Pacific train flying eastward across the Nebraska prairies. The landscape was monotony incarnate—broad, brown wastes of ripened corn and wider stretches of range land, dreary and uninviting to the eye. The passengers yawned or slept; only here and there was one more philosophic, who passed the weary hours with a book or magazine.

Just east of Columbus, three men got together in a doubled seat and began swapping business experiences and good stories. One was a stock man, another a lawyer, the third a commercial traveler. Each had about him an air of good-humored and prosperous contentment. The stories were in the main fresh and vivaciously told, the trio deservedly earned the good-will of their fellow passengers for relieving the monotony of a tiresome and uneventful ride. Those passengers within hearing bent forward in their seats, and as the laughter grew more and more boisterous, some of those in remote parts of the car arose and drew nearer, standing in the aisle or leaning against the arms of the seats, that they might have a share in the fun. The jokers were voted jolly good fellows.

"Well," the stock man cried at last, wiping from his eyes the tears of merriment born of the last witty recounting, "I've told all I know. I don't want to be in debt to you fellows; you'll have to quit, too. Anyway, I can't laugh any more to save my soul. Let's do something else."

The other passengers straightened up and went back to their seats, all save one awkward fellow, who lingered longingly, leaning against the back of one of the near seats, as though unwilling to give up this rare enjoyment.

"What'll it be?" the drummer asked. "High five? Seven up? It's over two hours to Omaha."

"Say, we're feeling pretty high-spirited," the lawyer said. "What's the matter with a little game of 'draw'? I haven't played a game of draw in centuries."

"Good enough," was the verdict.

"A three-handed game ain't sporty enough for me," the drummer remarked; "let's find another." He turned and looked up and down the car. His eyes rested upon the man who lingered near by, and whose homely face had grown alert at the mention of a game of draw. "Want to play?" the drummer asked. "Ever play poker?"

"I hev played," the man answered hesitatingly, glancing uneasily back toward his own seat. "Fact is, I jes' dearly love to play, but my wife back there, she don't like me to. Wait a minute, though," he suggested, as the drummer arose to make further search. "Jes' wait a minute; I'll go ask her. I'll tell her it'll be jes' a little game. Is that right?"

"That's right," the drummer answered. "Five-cent ante; twenty-five-cent limit—just a small game for fun." And as the other man went down the aisle to plead with his wife, the drummer added to his companions: "What a good boy! I hope the old girl will let him play; looks like he'd be funny, don't he?"

The stranger came back jubilant, his face wreathed in smiles. "She don't care," he said happily, and as he took his seat, and the cards and chips were brought, he added: "Fact is, we're jes' havin' a kind of a holiday, me an' her—goin' down to South Omaha, where she's got kin a-workin' in the packin'-house, to visit 'em. I told her this'd be jes' a little game, an' seemed like she'd oughter lemme play, bein' as we're off on a good time."

The game began. The stranger showed at once that he knew all the intricacies of draw, though luck was against him on his holdings. He lost three or four dollars without consternation.

"Gee!" he said, when the lawyer rallied him, "I'd be willin' to pay that much jes' for the fun of playin'. Hain't played in two year. I'm mighty glad I run acrost you fellers. You don' know how good it makes me feel."

Though he lost, he did not furnish the sport for which the drummer had declared a liking; so it came about that a raise of the limit and the institution of a jack-pot was suggested.

"I don' know," the stranger said; "I told her it was to be jes' a little game. She mightn't like it."

"How'll she know?" the drummer traitorously suggested. "Have you got to account to her for all your money?"

"No; course not," the stranger said resentfully, with a flush of embarrassment on his cheeks. "I've got the stuff, and I hain't got to account to nobody for it. 'Tain't that; all I'm thinkin' of is what I told her."

"Oh, she won't know anything about it," the other returned. "Brace up, old man. We're past Fremont; we're getting near Omaha. It can't last long; you can't lose much, even if luck is against you. Come on!"

They prevailed against his protestations; the limit was raised, and a jack-pot in all its glory took possession of the lapboard.

Then a strange thing happened. Hand after hand was dealt, and yet no man got a hand which could open the pot. It swelled to goodly proportions; several times it was "sweetened," and the stranger's eyes glistened.

"Hain't had sech fun in years!" he cried. "Hain't been in a jack-pot game since five year ago last Christmas, in North Platte. This is jes' bully!"

Then another odd thing happened, common to poker games. The stock man was dealing; the lawyer opened, and the stranger and the drummer stayed, the stock man dropping out. The lawyer bet the limit; the stranger raised him the limit; the drummer raised back five dollars. Two or three times around it went, each of the three apparently eager to stay, until there was more than three hundred dollars in that glorious pot.

"Holy smoke!" the drummer cried; "if I lose I'll hev to play draw on my house at Omaha. This is the biggest game I've struck since I had my salary cut."

"Hesh!" the stranger admonished anxiously; "she'll hear ye, an' then she'll know I storied to her."

But his wife had risen from her seat and walked down the aisle.

"We're pretty near South Omaha, Tommy," she said. "You'll hev to be quick."

"All right, Ellen," the man answered. "This can't las' much longer. I'll be ready in a minute."

As he spoke he pushed into the pot a stack of chips which raised his predecessor five dollars, grinning in genuine pleasure as he did so.

The end was not long delayed. The woman leaned over her husband's shoulder, looking at his hand.

"How funny!" she said with feminine interest; "four cards jest alike."

The stranger started angrily to his feet.

"Confound you, Ellen!" he cried. "Why can't you keep still?"

The woman started back at his violent exclamation, a scared look coming over her face.

"Why, Tommy," she said, "I didn't know——"

"There!" the man said; "I didn't mean to sass ye, but you've jes' spoiled the whole game. It's too dang bad!" The woman turned away and went back to her seat, her head drooping.

"She didn't sense the game," the stranger said apologetically, half-angry, half-abashed at the calamity. He looked dubiously at the drummer, whose turn it was to bet. The drummer laid down his hand; so did the lawyer. The stranger pocketed four hundred dollars.

"Gol dang it!" he said, as he sat for a moment idly shuffling the cards; "too bad, weren't it? But then, Ellen didn't know. Anyway, we couldn't hev played much longer, 'cause here's South Omaha now. Good-by, fellers; I'm powerful glad I run acrost you, sure I am." He shook hands with them heartily and then left the car with his wife.

"What's the trouble over there?" inquired an inquisitive passenger across the aisle; "did the farmer bluff you out?"

"Bluff!" the stock man said; "that fellow got a cool four hundred out of a jack-pot with four of a kind!"

The inquisitive man stared. "Four of a kind!" he shouted; "why, that fellow didn't have a darned thing in his hand but queen high; I saw his hand myself, across the aisle!"

And that night three sleepers dreamed of "Ellen."

$5 AND A DOG

MARY ANN THOMPSON was the last wife to be sold at public auction in England, the "sale" taking place at Carlisle in 1832. She was the spouse of a farmer, Joseph Thompson, and had been married about three years when her husband decided to sell her on the auction block. This old practise, although it never had legal sanction, had been followed in rural sections of England for centuries.

The auction commenced at noon on the appointed day, Thompson placing his wife in a large oaken chair, with a rope around her neck. He pointed out her faults and her good qualities to the assembled throng. There were few bidders, but at length she was "knocked down" to Henry Mears, who paid twenty shillings and a Newfoundland dog. Mrs. Thompson went away contentedly with her new owner, and is said to have lived happily with him.

FIRST "HUNGER" STRIKE

THE radical English suffragettes may have thought their "hunger strike" was something new; but, according to the historical sharps, it was "old stuff." They have found that 560 years ago Cecilia de Rygeway was released from prison after having remained mute and abstained from "meate and drink" for forty days. The fair Cecilia was lodged in Nottingham jail to answer the charge of having murdered her husband, John de Rygeway. From the first day of her imprisonment she refsued to permit any food or drink to pass her lips and said never a word to any one. Her case was brought to the attention of Edward III, who, it is recorded, was convinced that she had accomplished these feats by "fully trustworthy testimony," for which reason, "and for the glory of God and the Blessed Virgin, to whom the miracle was owing, the monarch granted the woman a full pardon."

COULD SAVE 52,000,000 TONS OF COAL A YEAR

NIAGARA FALLS, without losing their scenic grandeur, could solve our coal problem. If 3,000,000 horse-power, one-half the mighty force going to waste at the great cataract, were harnessed and turned into electricity, it would mean a saving of 100 tons of coal each minute, 52,000,000 a year; 62,000 cars would be released for other service, and our fuel shortage would change to a surplus.

By the use of submerged dams, this power could be developed and at the same time the rapid wearing away of the crest of the falls could be checked, thereby preserving their beauty for generations to come. These statements were made in an address by C. A. Winder, before the Schenectady Section of the American Institute of Electrical Engineers, published in *Electrical Experimenter.*

Niagara is an ideal location for the electro-chemical industry, upon which the war makes great demands. Not a shell is made that is not shaped by electrically-made abrasives. The electric furnace from which the armor plate is poured used electrodes made from coal by the aid of electric power, the resisting power of this same steel is given by electrically-made ferro alloys. Merchant vessels are now using smoke buoys in which quantities of phosphorus and other electro-chemical products are burned, emitting large quantities of smoke, thus protecting the boat from the submarine. Its products also go into high explosives, airplanes, balloons and almost every tool of the modern army. War demands many things not produced in time of peace.

The electro-chemical industries already located at Niagara make use of the 250,000 horse-power developed on the American side, and formerly imported another 150,000 from Canada. Owing to the increased needs of the Dominion, much of the latter has been shut off. The full utilization of the power of the falls would not benefit the present generation alone; the world's supply of coal is not inexhaustible, and the day will come when other sources of energy must be found.

THE RENEGADE DETECTIVE

A Serial Story

By RANDOLPH BADGER

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE PRISON

A SHORT distance up the river from Brierly Mansion stood an old stone structure, built in the eighteenth century, and probably used as a blockhouse by the early settlers in that region. It was two stories in height, perfectly square in shape, had but one door, a large number of small iron-barred windows, and it stood on a crag fifty feet above the river, on an overshelving rock. This place served as a prison for the county, and was taken care of by a warden and his family of a wife and two sons. John Rackstraw marched his two prisoners there, preceded by the new magistrate, and after making a formal charge against them, the two worthies left them to their fate and went away. The warden did not keep a full house as a usual thing, and was highly elated on receipt of two birds to cage. After registering their names, ages and the charge, Jigger offered a remonstrance.

"We are not tramps!" he exclaimed.

"That is the charge," said the keeper, shrugging his shoulders.

"But look at my badge. I am a detective."

"A detective? Ha, ha, ha! What a whopper!"

"Here is proof!" said Jigger indignantly.

He threw open his shabby coat quite consequentially.

"But where is the badge?" asked the amused keeper.

Jigger looked down at his bosom and saw with dismay that the badge was gone! He was staggered for a moment, and the keeper laughed again.

"Why," stammered Simon confusedly, "I must have lost it."

"Come, come," said the keeper dryly, "what is the use of fooling this way?"

"You didn't lose it, Jigger," interposed Sammy.

"I didn't? Have you got it?"

"No; but I seen that fat constable take it off."

"Ah! That explains its disappearance."

"You cannot gull me that way," said the keeper cunningly.

"We don't want to gull you. If you wish to do us a real kindness, send to Ketchum's Detective Agency, in Nassau street, New York. They will tell you that I am an officer on their staff."

"You must imagine I am a donkey to concern myself in your affairs."

"Then send to the Red Shield, where we board."

"I will do nothing of the kind."

"This is outrageous. How am I to defend myself?"

"You can send a note by my son for witnesses as to your character, if you will pay for it," said the keeper with an evil smile.

"All right, give me pen, ink and paper."

"This job will cost you ten dollars."

"Oh, Lord!" said Jigger in despair. "I haven't got half as much with me."

"Then you must stay here until you are tried."

And with no further ado he marched them off to a cell in back of his office on the ground floor, and locked them up together at the extreme end of the stone-flagged corridor dissecting the tier of grated doors.

Their hearts sank when the door shut with a metallic clang, and they heard the rusty key grate in the lock. They had only one consolation, and this was the fact that they were confined together in one cell.

When the warden returned to his tiny office, he found Joslin awaiting him.

"Well," asked the rascal, "have you got them safe?"

"Like rats in a safe."

"I came back to tell you that it is to my interest to keep them locked up."

"You can do it if you comply with my infallible rules."

"By that you mean money, I presume?"

The keeper nodded and smiled winningly.

"Of course. I am a poor man, and get a small salary," he said.

"How much is this worth? I do not want to try them."

"One hundred dollars."

"Here it is. Do not let them escape, or hold any communication with any one."

He handed the smiling keeper a roll of bills, which was eagerly grasped and quickly pocketed, and repeating his injunction, he went away again.

Sammy and Jigger waited several days for their trial to come off, but, despite all the questions with which they plied the keeper, he would give them no information when he fetched their meals.

At last Jigger began to grow desperate.

"His object is only to keep us confined here, Sammy," he said one night.

"What for?"

"Because he is afraid of me."

"Can't we escape?"

"I don't see how."

"Just look-a here."

"Well?"

"I think I can get those bars out of the window."

"Have you tried it?"

"I've been pickin' at 'em ever since we've been in here."

Simon walked to the narrow window with the boy, and shook the bars.

"They are as tight as trivets!" he exclaimed in disgust.

"Didn't you notice that they are only soldered in with lead?"

"True enough; but how can you get it out? We have nothing, as that infernal warden took our pocket-knives and everything else."

"This will do just as good," said Sammy.

He picked up one of Simon's shoes from the floor, which were pretty well used up, and, lifting up the worn sole, he drew out the steel vamp.

"Well, I swear! you are a genius!" exclaimed Simon delightedly.

Sammy began picking at the solder, and, working assiduously an hour, he had dug out quite considerable, when they heard the keeper coming and hastily concealed the vamp. He brought them their supper and departed again. They quickly ate it, and, to facilitate their work, Simon broke the stone jug containing their water and concealed several sharp pieces in their straw pallets. They did not dare to dig out any more lead that night, from fear of detection when a search would be made and their implements would be taken away. In order to cover their tracks they began to sing, dance and shout just before retiring, and after creating a wild hullabaloo, the keeper came running in in alarm.

"Here, here! What's the matter with you fellows?" he asked.

"None of your business, you bald-headed old vampire," replied Simon carelessly.

"Shut up that racket, or I'll put you in a dungeon downstairs."

"Oh, dry up. Look here what we did—smashed your old pitcher."

"Blast you!" growled the keeper. "That's half a dollar out of my pocket. Next time you want water you'll get it in a bucket."

He procured a broom and carefully swept out the cell, meantime keeping a wary eye on his prisoners, as if he half-suspected an assault, and warned them over and over again that if they dared to attack him he would shoot them.

When he was gone they kept up their noise some time longer to deceive him, meantime working away to dislodge the three iron bars. They could have secured the bars and attacked him, overpowered him and escaped that way, but as their offense was slight on which they were incarcerated, Simon deemed it best to make themselves as little amenable to the law as possible. It took them several days, working steadily, to loosen all the bars, and then they were suddenly brought to the verge of despair again.

"My God! What consummate fools we have been!" exclaimed Jigger on the night that they finally finished their work.

"What's up, eh?" asked Sammy in alarm. "Are we discovered?"

"No; but now we've got the bars out, just look at the distance it is from here to the river—fully fifty feet."

"Well, can't we tear up the bed and make a rope of it?"

"Impossible, Sammy. We have only a blanket. It is rotten. There is the bed-ticking; that, too, is rotten!"

"What's the matter with our clothes?"

"You are silly. And leave us naked? Besides, they are too rotten."

"Then we can't escape?" asked the boy in alarm.

"I don't see any way except to jump. Can you swim?"

"Like a duck. And you?"

"Expertly. I will risk a jump if you will, my boy."

"It is rather dangerous," said Sammy.

"Still, worth a trial. How long we are to remain imprisoned I don't know. Only one wrench at these bars and the avenue to freedom is open."

"Hallo!" suddenly exclaimed the boy, starting. "What's that?"

"What?"

"Just see that string hangin' out the winder."

"Why," cried Simon excitedly, "some one up-stairs has let it down."

"That's what I think, too. See! it's movin' now."

"We'll soon see if any friend is at the other end of it," said Jigger.

He drew in the end and tied the broken bit of the jug to it and gave it a gentle tug. The next moment it was drawn up.

"That looks as if some one up-stairs wanted to find out who we are," said Sammy.

"Wait and we'll see," was the cautious reply.

Fully an hour passed before it came down again.

There was a small piece of gunny-cloth tied to the end of it, such cloth as is used by tailors to stiffen portions of clothing, and Jigger secured and scrutinized it closely. There were some red-colored words written on it, which he read aloud:

"Who are you—prisoners—friends? My confinement is forced."

"By Jupiter!" exclaimed Simon. "Some poor wretch like ourselves—a victim to the keeper, I'll bet. He heard us making that terrific noise."

"Are you a-goin' to answer him?" asked Sammy.

"What's the good? We can't help him. Evidently he wrote this with his own blood."

"But maybe he can help us!" was the wise rejoinder.

"True enough. Here, Sammy, hand me one of those little pieces of lead; we can write with it as good as if it was a pencil."

Taking one of the particles of lead which had been dug out, Simon held the piece of cloth against the wall and wrote on the back of it:

"We are prisoners and can escape. Who are you?"

Up went the cloth, and shortly after down came another piece, upon which was written in the same red characters:

"Pull on the string; we will escape together."

"Hurrah! Unity is strength, and we are free!" cried Simon.

The boy grasped the string, and, drawing down on it, after a moment they saw a rope extemporized from cloth of some kind come down, and a moment later, it having reached the limit, they made it fast to one of the bars. Darkness was falling early, as a storm was brewing, which was a fortunate thing for them, as it would improve their chance to escape.

It was probable that their mysterious correspondent was waiting for the cover of darkness to make his appearance, for he did not come down.

They crouched back in a corner and waited breathlessly for the time to pass.

The storm soon burst forth with terrific violence.

Two hours elapsed, when suddenly they heard a cry overhead.

"Oh! Oh-h! Father! Help! Help! The prisoner is escaping!"

Bang! bang! bang! sounded the reports of a revolver a moment later, followed by a fearful wail of agony that rang thrillingly across the crags, and found responsive echoes out on the dark flowing river.

Simon and the boy sprang to their feet and rushed to the window.

Outside the sky was black, and it was as dark as pitch.

Thunder was muttering in the distance, and an occasional glare of vivid lightning flashed across the murky heavens.

Bang! bang! bang! went the pistol again, echoed by a peal of thunder.

"Help! Father! Help!" shrieked the man's voice again.

"My God!" cried Simon hoarsely, "he is discovered."

Gaffer Grimes, the keeper, rushed up to the cell-door and glared in through the bars.

"Hello!" he shouted. "Are you there?"

"We are here," replied Jigger quickly.

"Those cries!" he exclaimed distrustedly. "They——"

"Help! help!"—bang! bang!—"help!" came the sound of voice and pistol.

"It is up-stairs!" gasped the pale warden, and he rushed away.

"Now, Jigger!" exclaimed the boy. "The bars—quick!"

They turned to the window again and wrenched the bars from their sockets.

A man appeared on the window-ledge just as the lightning flashed.

"Good heavens!" cried Simon, reeling back, "it is Ralph Desmond!"

"I am discovered!" panted Desmond, who clung to the rope outside of the window.

"Are you hurt?"

"Aye! He has riddled me with bullets!"

Bang! bang! roared Gaffer's pistol at this moment.

"Quick! your hand!" cried Simon.

Ralph reached in and they barely caught him just in time as the rope was cut up above, and the end came tumbling down. Ralph uttered a wild cry; they tried to save him, but his nerveless hand slipped through theirs, and he pitched over backwards down the yawning abyss! Again the pistols were discharged.

"Oh, God! Oh, God! He is lost!" shrieked Simon.

Sammy was clinging desperately to the iron bar to which the other end of the cloth rope was fastened, and suddenly was hurled off his feet. Simon caught him. He still held the bar. There was a fearful strain at the other end.

"He's got hold of the rope yet!" panted the boy huskily.

"Then he is not yet dead—he——"

"There he goes! The weight is gone!" interrupted the boy in horrified tones.

"This is terrible. But we must go, too," said Simon in frenzied tones.

"It is death!" sobbed the little fellow, half-crazed with excitement.

"No, no! Give me the rope! There! Now I have fastened it to the bed. We must slide down to the other end and drop the rest of the distance, as Ralph did, into the water. Hurry, hurry! We have no time to lose! Go first."

He caught up the boy in his arms, thrust him through the window, and then, grasping one of the iron bars, he turned his attention on the door.

The patter of quick footsteps was approaching the door, coming down the corridor, and the sound was quite close to the cell-door, just as Sammy caught hold of the rope, and, sliding down, disappeared from his view.

Hardly was the boy gone when the cell-door was flung open violently and a young man rushed in. It was Tom Grimes, the keeper's other son.

Raising his bar of iron, Jigger struck him a fearful blow on the head before he could advance a step, and a loud cry of agony escaped him as he fell over on the floor insensible. The cry pealed through the gloomy prison mournfully, and was answered by a mad shout in the voice of the warden, who now came running down the corridor with Jerry, his other son. They must have known by the tones of the cry of distress that something had happened, and the shout they sent back was at once encouraging, fierce and threatening. Simon knew that it would be utterly impossible for him to cope with the two, and, throwing aside the iron bar, he clambered up in the window aperture, and seized the rope. At the same moment he heard a wild shout come up from the darkness below in the tones of the boy, and he felt the rope slacken in his hands.

Sammy had dropped! There was a splash; then all was still.

The brilliant lightning now played incessantly across the dark vault of heaven, and Simon swung himself over the gulf just as Grimes and his son rushed into the cell and stumbled over the prostrate figure of Tom. He heard their cries and curses and began his descent.

Down he went carefully, hand over hand, and he had just gotten within a few feet of the end of the rope when, upon glancing up, he saw Gaffer protrude his head from the window and glare down upon him.

There was a perfectly satanic look of malevolence upon his evil face as he reached his arm out the window, a revolver in his hand, and, aiming at the man suspended at this dizzy, frightful height, fired again and again. Had not the wind been blowing a gale, poor Simon certainly would have been shot dead, but as he was swung back and forth with erratic motions, it was impossible to tell in the momentary darkness and blinding lightning light where he was in order to aim correctly. The bullets flew and screamed about him dangerously near, however, and he would have given all he possessed to have been in safe quarters just then. Down, down, down he continued, expecting every moment to be shot, and just as he reached the extreme end of the rope, it parted up at the window-ledge with a vicious snap, and down he shot through the intervening space like an arrow from a catapult.

Suddenly he came in contact with some one, and, grappling with the unknown, he strove to gain the mastery, attacking with all the strength and frenzy of a madman. The lighting showed him that the man was Rackstraw and his desperation was increased. The constable had a weapon in his hand and was on the lookout for them. He had captured Ralph, who lay on the ground, bound hand and foot, with his back to the cliffs. Rackstraw had called at the prison before the prisoners endeavored to make their escape, and had been quietly imbibing a glass of toddy with Gaffer when Jerry had discovered that Ralph was escaping and alarmed them by his cries. The struggle in the dark was unfavorable for both, and they exerted all their powers. It might have gone hard with Jigger, for the burly constable had downed him, when suddenly Sammy appeared upon the scene, and, knocking Rackstraw on the head with his own locust, the constable fell over stunned. They then turned their attention to Ralph, and, unfastening his bonds, they were about to assist him to rise, when suddenly he exclaimed in quick tones of alarm:

"Fly, fly, my friends! Here comes Grimes down the rocks. Save yourselves."

"Where shall we go?" panted Sammy, panic-stricken.

"Into the river!" exclaimed Jigger. "It is our only salvation."

"Hold, or you die!" howled the voice of Grimes, in tones that rang out sharp above the rack and blast of the storm, and they saw him rushing down a rocky cleft in the crags, struggling and staggering at every step to prevent himself tripping and falling over the rough, rocky path.

"Never! We will escape you yet, rascal!" shouted Simon. "Come on, Sammy! Into the river! Into the river! He can never catch us!" and with shouts of defiance at their enraged pursuer they plunged into the stormy waters, and soon disappeared, leaving the furious keeper standing over the body of Ralph Desmond, cursing his ill-fortune and consigning them to a watery grave in maddened tones.

(To be continued)

CURRENT NEWS

LETTER OVER THREE YEARS ON WAY

A letter written in Russia on February 3, 1915, by John Katz to his son, Max Katz, of Belleville, Mo., reached its destination the other day. It took three years for the letter to reach this country. In it the father tells his son of hopes for a Russian victory. Katz has two brothers-in-law serving in the Russian army.

A NEW DISEASE

A disease new to science and provisionally called "X" has broken out in the west and northwest of New South Wales and has already caused a number of deaths. The symptoms somewhat resemble those of cerebro-spinal meningitis, but is different pathologically from that disease, and in some respects is somewhat akin to pneumonia.

HIDES OF WOLVES VALUABLE

Six more gray wolves were added in his last hunt to the stack of pelts which Russell Harrell of Richland, Kan., is collecting on his hunting trips. This makes seven which he has captured this season. He used rabbits for bait and caught the wolves near the same haystack. Mr. Harrell received a bounty of one dollar a scalp and twenty-four dollars for the hides.

INDIAN COAT VALUABLE

A curio dealer in Steubenville, Ohio, has a coat covered with 3,300 elk teeth, which he values at $10,000. The coat was made by an Indian in Manitoba, Canada, and is sinew sewed. It weighs twenty-eight pounds. The owner of the coat is a member of the Order of Elks and wears the coat at all conventions. With the coat the owner wears an ordinary necklace made of the largest of the elk teeth in his collection.

RAINBOW BRIDGE

A recent professional paper of the United States Geological Survey on the geology of the Navajo country describes, as perhaps the most striking erosion feature within that region, a recently discovered natural bridge, which has been named the Rainbow Bridge. It spans Bridge Canyon, on the northwest slope of Navajo Mountain. Its symmetry and graceful proportions make it one of the finest natural bridges of the world.

AN ENORMOUS SAND-DIGGER

A large ladder dredge has recently been constructed for use at Neville Island, Pittsburgh, for dredging sand and gravel. This dredge has a ladder that will reach 50 feet below the surface of the water. It brings up the sand and gravel and delivers it into a revolving screen on the main deck. By means of secondary ladders the screened material is raised from tanks in the hull of the dredge to chutes that lead into barges alongside.

COMPLAINS ABOUT OWLS

Walter Evetts, towerman for the Big Four Railroad, at Shelbyville, Ind., who recently served at Sunman, Ind., as a relief operator, has returned with a story which caused his friends to term him a nature fakir. Evetts says that so many owls gather about the railroad office at Sunman and that they make such a noise cracking their beaks together, it is impossible at times to determine the clicking of the telegraph instruments.

SHOWER OF FISH

At Optega Hill, at the eastern limits of exclusive Montecito, Cal., it rained fish the other morning, according to F. M. Myers, a rancher there.

Myers says he went out on his porch after it had been raining an hour and was struck on the head by a fish which measured eleven inches. Other fish were said to be seen about, and still others were reported picked up farther inland.

In the meantime, at the Montecito Club, members are reported to be dining on shark as a fish conservation measure.

WHERE THE WIND BLOWS FROM THE NORTHWEST

A curious phenomenon of weathering has been noted upon the pyramidal granite monument erected at the summit of Sherman Pass, alongside the track of the Union Pacific Railroad, to commemorate the work of the Ames Brothers in building the line across the mountains. The bronze medallion of Oakes Ames, upon the southwest face of the pyramid, is in condition practically as good as when put up; but the relief on the northwestern tablet has been worn down considerably by the prevailing winds, which blow from that quarter.

NEWSPAPER "LOGS"

Keep warm with the newspaper log! It burns from three-quarters of an hour to an hour and a half in any fireplace or stove. *Popular Science Monthly* explains how it is made.

Spread five sheets of newspaper, folded once, on a table, with the folded ends toward you. Begin to roll them into a tight roll. Before the first section is completely rolled, insert another section, and continue until the "log" is from two to three inches in diameter. Saturate each roll thoroughly with kerosene.

FRENCH TYPEWRITER DESKS MAKE USERS STAND UP

Officials in the French army do not believe that the most efficient service is obtained from members of the military clerical force when the latter sit at their desks practically all day without interruption, says *Popular Mechanics*. Accordingly the French government is said to have installed, for the use of army clerks, typewriter stands so made that each machine is alternately raised and lowered each half-hour. Under this arrangement the most sedentary individuals are compelled to stand while doing a portion of each day's work. The innovation is reported to have proved very beneficial.

MERCHANTS TO WEAR OVERALLS

On account of the shortage of men on the farms, with spring work under way, the business men of Wasco, Ore., have prepared to donate two days' work on the county roads, which could not be reached with grading machines.

Commissioner E. D. McKee donned overalls the other morning and worked with a pick and shovel all day.

The county has in operation this spring a large tractor and a grading machine which is putting the roads in excellent condition.

HOW DUST CAUSES FIRE.

Spontaneous combustion is caused, so the chemists tell us, by floating particles of coal dust, or other inflammable material jostling and clashing against one another until the friction they set up raises their temperature to the ignition point, says *Popular Science Monthly.* If this explanation is correct, it would appear as if such fires could be prevented by perfect ventilation. Such, however, is not the case, for ventilation may actually help to bring about fire by spontaneous combustion. Air facilitates oxidation, really fanning the warm dust into a blaze. Keep air damp and quiet to avoid fire.

FARMER MAILS CHICKENS

The Hartman, Ark., post-office seemed converted into a poultry-yard the other day for transmission in the mails from one of the district post-offices. Postmaster Oberste handled the parcel with the required "celerity, certainty and security," until one of the roosters, becoming familiar with his new quarters, began crowing; then the coop was removed to the station, awaiting its despatch to Damascus.

Under a recent order of the postmaster general it is now permissible to send small chicks by parcel post. This order evidently was misconstrued when the despatching postmaster accepted the chickens for mailing.

WIRE-NETTING SPLINTS

A new kind of surgical splint in which galvanized wire-netting takes the place of wood has been put on the market. It has been tried and offers many advantages. The steel entering into the construction of this woven wire splint is so tempered that it can be molded by hand, explains *Popular Science Monthly.* Being galvanized, the wire is sterilized and at the same time welded into a single piece that cannot fray out at loose ends. As it is porous, it allows a certain amount of evaporation and air circulation to the dressings beneath, which wood or plaster does not. The splint comes rolled like a bandage and is lighter and less bulky than wooden splints.

ARE BIRDS MAGNETIZED?

One of the many explanations that have been offered to account for the fact that migrating birds are able to find their way by night and in cloudy or foggy weather is that they are sensitive, in some way, to currents of terrestrial magnetism, and therefore direct their flight by the magnetic meridians, says *Popular Science.* This suggestion was put forth by M. A. Thauzies, a French pigeon-fancier, who declares that carrier-pigeons make poor flights during the occurrence of magnetic storms. He also asserts that the general use of wireless telegraphy has diminished the reliability of these birds to a surprising extent.

FAINTING GOATS

Did you ever see a goat faint? Probably not; but the thing does happen—not perhaps to the every-day goat, but to animals of that breed which are found in Tennessee.

Oddly enough, in that State the "fainting goats," as they are called, seem to be restricted to one small locality. In other respects, says the Philadelphia *Ledger,* they are just like ordinary goats, but on slight provocation they will "throw a fit."

If suddenly approached or otherwise startled, they fall to the ground. Apparently the trouble with them is not heart-weakness, but a peculiar nervous complaint. Any sort of alarm gets their goat, so to speak.

MUSTACHE AN ARMY BADGE

It is against the British army regulations for an officer to shave his upper lip, and from time to time the British War Office has issued general orders expressing its disapproval of the growing disregard of this regulation.

The mustache long has been regarded as a military badge. Only one regiment in the Austro-Hungarian cavalry may go smooth-faced, and this is because during the Seven Years War recruits were so scarce that this regiment once had to go into battle when there were nothing but beardless boys in its ranks. It behaved with such gallantry, however, that its members remain beardless to the present day.

OUR WOMEN ALSO SERVE

While in the larger cities their work is not so noticeable, in the smaller centers of population our women are slowly but surely taking over the work of the men who are now in the army, navy and other government service. So far our women workers have not taken over the heavier classes of work found in manufacturing plants because there are still ample numbers of men available. However, in plants where there is much light, manufacturing women are to be found in profusion. In stores, hotels and even in street-cars, American women are taking the places of men with the colors. Women soda-water dispensers and elevator runners are now quite common in most cities.

REJECTED 45 TIMES

Forty-five attempts to enlist in the fighting forces of Uncle Sam is the record of Alfred Paul M. Lose, of St. Louis, who visited the headquarters of the District Appeal Board to get advice as to how he could enter the service. He caused some amusement when he volunteered the information that since registering for the draft he had been physically examined and rejected forty-five times.

"I have tried to get into all branches of the service, but they say my eyes and feet are bad, and they won't take me," said Lose.

He asserted he had stood nine examinations in Pittsburgh, six each in Chicago and Peoria, two in New York, two in Toledo and one in Camden, N. J.

TOUGH LEATHER MADE FROM FISH SKIN

Leather made from the skins of sturgeons and sharks has just aroused the intense interest of the makers of shoes, machinery belting and bags, to whom it has been shown by Theodore Metzger, a chemist who invented the process of tanning fish skins.

This leather takes every known finish and cannot be told from cowhide, except by experts, and these find that it differs from the best ordinary leather only in having a longer fiber and a greater tensile strength. A test by the Bureau of Standards gives it a tensile strength of 6,000 pounds to the square inch.

There is such an abundance of sturgeon and shark skin available that the new leather can be sold at a profit for only half what the old costs.

HAUNTED ISLANDS

Chirikof Island, a lonely bit of land with inhospitable shores, which lies under almost perpetual fog in the North Pacific, eighty miles southwest of Kadiak, is a "land of ghosts," according to Alaska native fishermen and Indian navigators. The island has no inhabitants, say natives who have been forced by storms to land there, and seldom are any boats piloted into its few harbors.

Native legends say that to Chirikof were banished the early Russian residents of Kadiak Island, who broke the Russian laws, or the edicts of the Czar's representatives. These unfortunates, the stories say, were loaded with chains and landed at Chirikof to wait for death to end their sufferings. Their souls still roam the island, the natives believe, and fill the air with lamentations and the clanking of chains.

RUSSIAN OBLIGATIONS

The engagements entered into by the Imperial Russian government are still existent, and its obligations bind the new states, which now represent, or shall in future represent, Russia, the British and French governments declare, in a joint declaration made public in Paris recently. The declaration sets forth that the Imperial Russian government, when it made its engagements, incontestably represented Russia and definitely bound her. No authority which commands or will command affairs in Russia, it is declared, can repudiate such engagements without fundamentally shaking international law. Otherwise, it is pointed out, security in relations between states will no longer exist, and the credit of states would be ruined politically and financially.

ELECTED BY LOTTERY

The tiny republic of San Marino is governed by two captains regent, who are chosen by a lottery and are subject to a fine of $100 and banishment if they refuse the office. The names of twelve of the sixty members of the grand council are drawn, and each of these nominate a candidate. The dozen men so nominated are submitted to a vote of the council, and the six having the highest votes are included in the ancient lottery of the ingresso.

Having reduced the field to six, the method of election of the two governors is simple. Three pieces of paper, each bearing the names of two candidates, are placed in an urn. This is carried with great pomp and ceremony to the cathedral, accompanied by all the members of the council. Mass is celebrated, after which a boy draws from the urn one of the slips of paper and the two names written on it are those of the new captains regent.

SECOND-HAND PIANOS WANTED

Any one having an old piano to sell can find a ready market in England. It is an interesting sidelight of the war that England's piano trade is more active than in many years, and because of restricted production the business is mainly in used instruments. The demand comes principally from provincial munition centers, where there has been such a marked increase in wages since the beginning of the war.

A great round-up of second-hand pianos is in progress in London and the suburbs. People in many districts are receiving offers from dealers to purchase their instruments, and apparently some dealers are circularizing whole neighborhoods in the hope of finding a few families willing to dispose of their pianos.

The wood and wire formerly used in making pianos are now required for aeroplanes, and many of the larger piano manufacturers have given over their plants to aeroplane manufacture. Labor in the piano industry is also scarce.

Second-hand baby grand pianos, which are most in demand, sell rapidly at 100 guineas ($510), if in good condition. A few years ago the same instruments, when new, were sold at about $865. Second-hand upright grand pianos that were formerly sold new at about $120 now bring $250.

HOW ENGLISH GROWS

If English-speaking people of to-day do not talk more than their ancestors it is not for lack of a vastly increased number of words in which to convey their thoughts. The first English dictionary, published three centuries ago, contained 5,080 words; the most recent more than 450,000. Samuel Johnson's famous compilation, which appeared in 1755, listed 50,000 and was considered a marvel of erudition, but it was far exceeded by Noah Webster's American dictionary, first published in 1828, which included 160,000 words.

It is estimated that the English language, which is spoken by more people than any other European tongue, is now growing at the rate of 5,000 words a year, for, besides slang and technical terms, it borrows from all tongues. The war alone will undoubtedly add many thousands. The first of the world's dictionaries was, of course, a Chinese work, and was perfected about 1100 B. C. by Pa-out-she.

SUNDAY SPORTS IN MERRIE ENGLAND

The agitation for Sunday baseball in New York recalls the fact that the first reference to Sunday sports in England is perhaps that contained in a special license granted by Queen Elizabeth, under date of April 26, 1659. This license permitted "John Seconton, poulter, having four small children, and fallen into decay, to have some plays and games at or upon several Sundays for his better relief, comfort and sustentation." The games to be permitted under the direction of this Elizabethan promoter included "the shooting with the standard, the shooting with the broad arrow, the shooting at twelve score brick, the shooting at the Turk, the leaping for men, the running for men, the wrestling, the throwing of the sledge and the pitching of the bar." The authorities were advised by Good Queen Bess to attend the games with "four or five discreet and substantial men" to keep the peace and prevent disorder.

INDIANPHONEPHOBIA

A Western magazine of telephony gives this unique sidelight on a well-remembered historical incident: "Sitting Bull had been captured by the United States troops and was held in close confinement. So also was another obstreperous Indian held in confinement at a post about one hundred miles away. The officer in charge of Sitting Bull had been chasing the Indians for two months, and was wondering what to do with the captive. In an inspired moment he decided to arrange an interview between the two Indians over the telephone. After the necessary ringing up, Sitting Bull was asked if he cared to talk into the machine. He talked into it for several minutes and did a heap of listening also. He put down the instrument finally, and for hours was even more gloomy than usual, at last beginning to talk to himself, something very rare for the Indian. Asked if he was dissatisfied with his accommodations, or if there was anything they could do for him, he broke forth at last: 'No; I'm finished. It's all right when the white man's plaything talks the white man's language; but when it learns to talk the red man's tongue it's time to stop.'"

LEATHER FROM FISH AND FROGS

In the hunt for new sources of leather, strange things are turning up. It has been ascertained that the skins of frogs and toads can be tanned and turned to account for card-cases and other fancy articles.

The government Fisheries Bureau says that the skin of the codfish furnishes an excellent leather, tough as parchment and very durable. The same is true of salmon skin, which the Indians along the Yukon River, in Alaska, have long utilized for clothing.

Eelskins are employed in Europe for binding books, and in Egypt shoesoles are made from the skins of certain fishes caught in the Red Sea.

Sturgeon skin affords a handsome ornamental leather, and the hide of the armored garfish is much valued in Europe, being covered with horny plates that can be polished to an ivory-like finish.

The skin of the wolf-fish—a ferocious little creature that often attacks persons who venture in wading along the rocky seashore of New England—is now being used for card-cases and shopping-bags.

The green leather called "shagreen," remarkable for its wearing quality and imperviousness to water, is made from the hide of the "angel shark" of the Mediterranean.

In Tartary dried and oiled fish-skins serve as a substitute for glass in windows, being sufficiently translucent for the purpose.

FIRST BUS LINE

The first omnibus line in the history of the world was started in Paris 256 years ago. The date is historic, for the omnibus was one of the first expressions of that liberty, fraternity and equality that was to result in the Revolution. The very name is derived from the Latin and means "For all."

In seventeenth-century-Paris there were many carriages for hire, but they were beyond the reach of the poor. So a company of benevolent gentleman, with three nobles at their head, secured from Louis XIV a charter to operate a line of public vehicles. Under the charter each omnibus was to have a capacity of not less than eight people, and to run from fixed points in the outskirts of the city through certain streets at scheduled hours, "for the benefit of a great number of persons ill provided for, as persons engaged in law-suits, infirm people and others, who have not the means to ride in chaise or carriage, which cannot be hired under a pistole or a couple of crowns a day."

The fare on the pioneer bus line was five cents. Seven coaches were built and put into operation, elaborate ceremonies marking the inaugural. All Paris was curious about the new vehicles, and soon the wealthy and fashionable people began to ride in them. They demanded greater exclusiveness, and manual laborers, domestic servants and private soldiers were forbidden to ride in the public vehicles. The coaches, which were intended to be "for all" became to the masses but symbols for oppression, and stones were showered upon them, so that troops had to accompany and guard them. Soon the omnibus fad among the rich died out and the pioneer bus company ceased operation.

SOME RECENT PATENTS, ETC.

Gymnastic apparatus to be attached to the head of a bed to permit persons to exercise before rising, has been patented by a Philadelphian.

The government of Uruguay will establish a school for farm foremen, the pupils being limited to young men unable to pay for their education.

Like a gear-wheel with the teeth turned downward is the head of a new long-handled spoon intended for stirring the contents of deep cooking utensils.

Of European invention is a machine that embroiders designs on three dozen pairs of stockings at once, a battery of needles making 288 stitches simultaneously.

A shoulder shield for icemen has been invented, which protects their shoulders from cakes of ice carried and also leads the drippings away from their clothing.

Patents have been granted a Japanese resident of Los Angeles for apparatus for treating diseases by applications of heat gradually increasing in degree until a patient becomes able to withstand the maximum temperature.

A recently patented toaster holds a slice of bread between two spring clips so that the heat can strike its entire surface.

A patent has been granted for a brush and comb mounted on a box into which they fold for carrying or to protect them from dust.

Driven by bicycle gearing and a propeller, a miniature submarine has been invented in which bathers can plunge beneath the water.

A process has been invented in Holland for manufacturing a food for swine from fish refuse that does not affect the flavor of the pork.

A rubber washbasin has been invented for motorists or tourists that is proof against hot water and can be folded compactly for carrying.

WOUNDED SOLDIERS GET FINE CARE

No American soldier who has the misfortune to be wounded in France will suffer from lack of care, as reports show that the medical branch of our army is splendidly equipped for its work. Indeed, an injured man will probably receive better attention than he could secure at home, for many specialists of national reputation, besides some of the best women nurses are serving as volunteers in the military hospitals.

A careful system for handling the disabled has been worked out. If a soldier receives a wound in the trenches it is dressed at once from the first-aid kit, a small tin case which every man carries. Stretcher-bearers, or his comrades, then assist him to the first-aid dressing station, usually a dugout and often within a hundred yards of the fighting-line. A hammock stretcher has been devised for use in narrow, winding trenches.

The medical officer at the first-aid station gives the wound a more careful dressing, injects antitetanus serum and telephones for an ambulance. The latter comes as close to the front as is possible, always a dangerous service, as German flyers regard both ambulances and hospitals as fair targets for their bombs.

The wounded man is taken to the field hospital, four or five miles to the rear, and his injury is inspected. If an operation is imperative, it is performed; but if the patient is strong enough, he is made comfortable and sent without delay to an evacuation hospital, eight or ten miles from the front, and where American women nurses are on duty. If it is possible, every wounded soldier will be under the care of a woman nurse, in a place of comparative quiet and safety, within twenty-four hours after his injury is received.

The evacuation hospitals are completely equipped, having special wards for each different type of wound, and here the disabled man remains until he is convalescent.

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If this should meet the eye of any woman who is troubled with wrinkles and who would like to efface them, leaving her skin smooth, firm and fine-textured, I shall be pleased to send her a recipe free of charge. My address is: Elizabeth King, 142 E. 32nd Street (TA-101), New York City. This recipe is for a delightful emollient for worry lines, crows feet, and is held in high esteem by society ladies, actresses and others who use it.

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Copy this sketch! If YOU CAN copy this drawing 40% as good as the reproduction herewith shown, you will receive a correspondence **Tuition Certificate valued $10.00 as specified on the voucher for either Cartooning, Comic Drawing, Newspaper and Magazine Illustrating or Commercial Illustrating.** The lessons are given by mail, by the widely known Associated Art Studios of New York City.

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To Men Who Are Bald or are Losing Their Hair

Let me tell you of my own case.

I was almost completely bald, and as I had tried many tonics, lotions, etc., without benefit, I expected to remain bald for the rest of my life.

But instead of baldness, I now have a complete growth of hair upon my head. This is all the more remarkable because I am 66 years old.

The way that I obtained a perfect hair growth was as simple as it was astonishing to me.

While traveling I met an old Cherokee Indian who gave me a pomade or ointment to use upon my scalp. Although my confidence was meager, I used this compound. He told me it contained selected components from the Three Kingdoms of Nature.

After several applications my looking-glass revealed a slight fuzz. This developed from day to day to a healthy growth of hair. Imagine my satisfaction in being able actually to brush the hair where there had been a bare scalp! Yet it was true. Soon I was able to comb it—and I have been able to do so ever since.

I traded with the old Indian savant, obtaining the recipe. It was crude and the ointment was almost nauseating. So I had it modernized, by a practical chemist, holding to the original principle, and now from the recipe a cosmetic pomade is prepared. Men and women have used it—and many are now doing so. In numerous cases remarkable results are being reported.

This ointment contains no alcohol nor anything else that has a tendency to dry the hair, the scalp or the roots.

The way for you to prove what it will do for you is to try it. I will mail you the recipe free of charge. Your own physician will tell you that it is safe and you may obtain a supply from the druggist. Or you may get it from me. It is called Kotalko. A proof box will be mailed, with the recipe, if you send 25 cents, silver or stamps, to John Hart Brittain, 150 East Thirty-second St., BB-101, New York, N. Y. This is a genuine announcement devoid of the lavish phraseology of the usual advertisements, but it means exactly what it says, and I, being a business man of good reputation, stand ready to prove it to you.

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If you are nervous, despondent, weak, run-down through excess or other causes, we want to mail you our book which tells about **SEXTONIQUE**, a restorative remedy that will cost you nothing if you are not cured or benefitted. Every man needing a tonic to overcome personal weakness, etc., should get this free book at once. **CUMBERLAND CHEMICAL CO., 102 Berry Block, Nashville, Tenn.**

To You, Miss or Mrs., About Your Hair

This is a plain talk of real importance to you because it is absolutely honest and the information is genuine.

You have been losing your hair. It comes out on the comb or brush. The steady loss, as well as the fact that your hair is becoming thinner and weaker, is worrying you.

You have tried different lotions, tonics, washes, etc., that were recommended or which you saw advertised. None of these have done you any good. They were not the right remedy for your hair.

Well, dear Madam, here is a message of good cheer. It comes from a man.

Years ago when I was almost entirely bald I came across an old Cherokee Indian who induced me to try his recipe for growing hair. He told me that the principle of this formula was used by all Indians, male and female, wherever they found a weed of it.

You know that Indian women (and men too) have long, beautiful hair.

So I tried the recipe. The compound was an ointment for the scalp. It had a bad odor and was rather nasty. But my hair grew—and has continued to grow. Since then I have never had any trouble with my hair. At the age of 66 I now possess an abundant growth and visit the barber each month to have it cut. Once, after an accident, when I was compelled to remain in the hospital for several weeks, it grew so long that it was like a woman's flourishing hair growth.

The recipe I obtained from the old Indian savant and it has been used by many others. I have had the formula modernized by a practical chemist so that the cosmetic ointment now has a more pleasant odor and is more agreeable to apply to the scalp and base of the hair.

It contains no alcohol nor any of those ingredients which tend to dry the hair, scalp and roots. On the contrary, it is a fertilizing compound. The Indian principle is that it must contain elements from the three natural Kingdoms. This rule is maintained in the recipe.

I want you to try this cosmetic on your scalp. It can be applied when retiring each night, only a few moments being required. It is likely you will find a very satisfactory result, almost from the outset.

Now make no mistake; this is not a lovely scented preparation. There's nothing fancy about it. The name is Kotalko and you shall have the recipe free of cost by writing for it. Your druggist can supply the cosmetic according to the recipe; or you may obtain the compound from me, ready to use. Send me your name and address. The recipe will come free. If you would like a proof box of the cosmetic, enclose 25 cents, silver or stamps. My address is: John Hart Brittain, RD-101, 130 East Thirty-second St., New York, N. Y.

September Morn Ring—Free

The beautiful raised figure of the young girl is a wonderful reproduction in metal, of the original painting. The background is hard enameled in two colors to represent sea and sky. Ring is made of "Everbright Silver" warranted five years. We send it, your correct size, for only 12c to help pay advertising.
THE AUCTION CO., Dept. C Attleboro, Mass.

FREE FLASHLIGHT GENUINE EVEREADY

This genuine Eveready electric Flashlight complete with Tungsten battery, Mazda bulb, etc., size 1 1-2 x 6 1-2 given FREE for selling 20 packages of Bingo Perfumed Ironing Wax at 10c each. Easy to sell. Own a genuine Eveready Daylo. Order goods today. Send no money.
BINGO COMPANY, Dept. 328 BINGHAMTON, N. Y.

WILL POWER

If you are lacking in will power due to a lack of mental energy or timidity; if you feel dull or lazy; if you see others getting ahead of you who, in fact, are not so clever as you, and if you are seeking a stimulating remedy, try Woods V Tabules. Contain no alcohol nor any "dope," yet are wonderfully efficacious as an invigorant. Send for a box, at 50 cents or $1.00, to Edw. J. Woods, VA-103, Station F, New York, N. Y., and it will come to you promptly. Each tabule has potency. Let this remedy prove an aid in giving you the necessary physical and psychological start so as to develop your will power and make a success.

IF YOU ARE DRAFTED

It is a fine thing to be a soldier and it is even better when, after becoming one, you gain rapid promotion.

If you are able to do stenography—to write in shorthand—your chances for advancement are good. Many a young soldier has been given an especially good place in the Army because he could act as a secretary or clerical aide.

President Wilson uses shorthand; so do many other foremost men. You can learn K. I. Shorthand quickly, easily and at small cost. Write for the **free brochure** offered by the King Institute on page 48.

STOLEN

In the olden days there were robbers, too. Here's a scene which covers a Bible narrative. This man was **attacked** and his property—even his clothing—**stolen.** Tell, if you can, to what incident this picture refers. A few words will do. In your letter enclose four 3c stamps for one **Mending Marvel,** or 20c (silver or stamps) for a double packet, postpaid. We want you to earn a **BIG REWARD** in the **$10.00 Reward Offer** that we shall send you with eight more pictures. MENDING MARVEL is **valuable to everybody** in the home. A convenience and money saver. Answer this and be **delighted** with what comes to you. Satisfaction guaranteed or remittance, including postage, returned to you. This is our **Big Happiness Surprise** for all—young or old. *Address*

ALBRO SOCIETY, Inc., AA-101, Station F, NEW YORK, N.Y.

Reward to you

MOUSTACHE

To accelerate the growth of a Moustache use KOTALKO. A small box will be mailed for 25 cents; a large box, for $1.00. Postpaid in plain package. Cash or stamps. **John Hart Brittain,** 130 East 32d St., (BC-101), New York, N. Y.

How to Darken Your Hair

If you wish to look young and to maintain an attractive personality, do not allow your dark hair to become or to remain gray. You need make no experiments. An efficacious, easy-to-apply method is available. It is known as Koskott No. 4, and we offer it in powder form, ready for you to put in water and use occasionally to make your hair beautifully dark, and keep it so. Safe and reliable. Defies detection. Your friends will be pleasantly surprised in seeing you apparently become younger. You'll naturally become more cheerful and lithesome under the happy psychological influence of beautiful dark hair. Send only 17 three-cent stamps (51 cents), to KOSKOTT LABORATORY, 146 East 32d Street, LA-101, New York, N. Y. Satisfaction fully guaranteed.

Cigarette Habit

How to Overcome It Quickly and Easily

Unless you have been exceptionally careful the cigarette habit has a hold which you cannot shake off by will power.

The lure of the cigarette is powerful. Is it the nicotine that is poisoning your system, making you nervous, heart weak, dyspeptic, eye strained and irritable?

Are you troubled with sleeplessness at night and dullness in the morning until you have doped yourself with the nicotine of cigarettes or pipe, or chewing tobacco? They're all the same, you know.

Give your poison-saturated body, from your pale yellowish skin right into your pale yellowish liver, a chance to be free from the mean slavery of nicotine.

Get rid of the vicious habit. Lengthen your life. Become contented and spread happiness among others. Enjoy tranquility combined with forceful thought and real efficiency.

I know what will conquer the tobacco habit in three days. You gain the victory completely and privately at home.

My new book will be very interesting to you. It will come to you in a plain wrapper, free, postpaid. You will be surprised and delighted if you write to Edward J. Woods, WT-101, Station F, New York, N. Y.

Snuff Habit

If addicted to snuffing, chewing or dipping snuff, you know the bad effect and wish to conquer the pernicious craving. You will find just the information in a book that will be mailed free, in plain wrapper, if you write to Edw. J. Woods, WN-101, Station F, New York, N. Y. Overcome snuff habit gently, easily. Calmer nerves, soothing sleep, stronger eyes and heart—better health. Prove for yourself.

Eat Candy Reduce Weight

If you wish to reduce steadily, yet eat candy, ice cream, etc., get a small box of oil of korein at the druggist's. Follow the directions. Absolutely safe, guaranteed method of becoming thin. No self-starving; you become slender gracefully, vivacious, mentally and physically alert—glad you're alive. Reduction guaranteed 10, to 60 pounds.

Learn so Easily

K. I. SHORTHAND

New Book FREE

Learn in 5 Evenings

Then Acquire Speed Rapidly

Try This

A girl soon learns to write by K. I. shorthand and may earn $30 to $35 weekly.

IF YOU can learn the lesson (at the right) within 5 minutes, you should learn the principles of K. I. SHORTHAND in 5 hours of spare time — after which acquire speed rapidly.

This is the perfected, QUICK, EASY METHOD If you wish to know how fast it is possible to write by K. I. Shorthand, ask somebody to read this whole advertisement rapidly within three minutes by your watch. Thus you'll realize the speed with which you should write after pleasant practice. SIMPLIFIED STENOGRAPHY.

Here's p and, this is o a Write the two together, and you have po

Here's th To make path you simply write p and with these two easy movements of your pencil, you have made a word that needs 16 pencil movements when written in longhand.

Here's t so it is easy to write pat, tap and pat.

Already you have learned four K.I. Shorthand signs you won't forget.

With the other signs and easy directions you can learn to indicate every word in the dictionary in quarter to twentieth of the time required in ordinary writing, as rapidly as words are spoken!

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Hindrances of old systems eliminated; no shading; no bother about positions on, over or under ruled lines—and you can read your own notes readily after months or years. Hence K. I. Shorthand is valuable for private notes, messages, etc.

K. I. Shorthand can be learned so quickly and easily that it is like a pastime. A SCORE OF DIFFERENT USES. Use it for taking dictation, telephone messages, notes, sermons, lectures, speeches, conferences, lessons, evidence. For making rapid notations while working problems, confidential diary or memoranda, etc. *Let K. I. Shorthand prepare you to walk with Opportunity through the Door to Success!*

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Write for FREE BROCHURE with convincing testimonials to show that ours is a practical method with which you can make a SUCCESS. Do not miss this opportunity of a lifetime. To learn K. I. Shorthand will add to your efficiency and earning ability, also to the pleasure of your life. Write, or use coupon below, for free Brochure. Mention this newspaper. Address:

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Name .....

Address EC-101

A SECRET

How Actors and Actresses Overcome Obesity and Reduce Their Figures Gracefully

HOW TO BE SLENDER

People wonder how it is that actresses and actors maintain their graceful figures, their buoyancy and litheness when the tendency is to become stout.

The popular theory that these heroines and heroes of the stage and the movies follow rigid systems of self-starvation (fasting) and strenuous exercising is erroneous. If they were to do this, they could not be so vigorous or supple. They would be unfit for their duties.

Neither can these performers take drastic drugs such as thyroid extract, salts, purgatives, etc., for reducing their weight, for those are injurious and weakening.

There is a very efficacious self-treatment known as the Korein system which consists in taking a harmless vegetable compound oil and following simple directions. The name of this oil is Oil of Korein. For convenience it is put up in little capsules, easy to swallow. They give the breath a delightful aromatic odor.

By following this method, the superfluous fat may be eliminated without causing any wrinkles. Indeed, the flesh becomes firm, while the skin is kept white and velvety.

If you find yourself too stout, you should lose no time in getting a small box of Oil of Korein. Most drug stores sell it. With each box is a $100 cash refund guarantee of assured weight reduction if the easy directions are followed.

When you have lost whatever surplus adiposity you desire, it will be easy for you to maintain a graceful, slender figure. By the Korein system persons have reduced from five to sixty pounds, according to their requirements of beauty.

There is usually a wonderful improvement in the health and mind. Irritability disappears and is replaced by cheerfulness. You see things in an optimistic light, your efficiency is developed—you are your real self. Surely this is better for you than to have your beauty spoiled by gross fatness. Enjoy life and hold the esteem of others.

A booklet is published called "Reduce Weight Happily" which will be mailed free (in plain wrapper) if you write to Korein Company, ND-101, Station F, New York, N. Y. You would do well to obtain this treatise, for it contains much information of value to you—if you are overstout, or if you are gradually becoming so. Correspondence is confidential.

If you have a friend who has tried in vain to reduce weight by dieting, tedious exercises, taking strong doses of purgatives, or other unsatisfactory methods, you will do a lifelong favor by calling attention to this—the true and genuine method.

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